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NUMBER SIX

Everybody's



JUNE, 1922

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If It's in Everybody's It's a Good Story

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Three Serials, a Complete Novel, a Novelette,
Five Short Stories and a Play

See Announcement, page 170

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for April 1, 1922. State of New York. County of New York, ss. Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared JAMES F. BIRMINGHAM, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher: THE RIDGWAY COMPANY, a corporation, Spring and Macdougall Streets, New York City. Editor, SEWELL HAGGARD, 223 Spring Street, New York City. Managing Editor, none. Business Manager, JAMES F. BIRMINGHAM, 223 Spring Street, New York City. 2. That the owners are: (Give names and addresses of individual owners, or, if a corporation, give its name and the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of the total amount of stock.) Owner: THE RIDGWAY COMPANY, a corporation, Spring and Macdougall Streets, New York City. Stockholders: FEDERAL PUBLISHING COMPANY, a corporation, 15 Exchange Place, Jersey City, N. J. Stockholder of FEDERAL PUBLISHING COMPANY: THE BUTTERICK COMPANY, a corporation, Spring and Macdougall Streets, New York City. Stockholders of BUTTERICK COMPANY: GEORGE B. BLACK, 812 Lincoln Avenue, Mendota, Ill. CHARLES D. BARNEY & Co., Mills Building, New York City. JOHN M. DONINGTON, 37 Wall Street, New York City. CHARLES A. EDWARDS, 45 Wall Street, New York City. W. H. GELSHENEN, 100 William Street, New York City. S. R. LATSHAW, Butterick Building, New York City. JAMES H. OLIPHANT & Co., 61 Broadway, New York City. LAURA J. O'LOUGHLIN, 156 Ridge Street, Glens Falls, N. Y. MRS. ARETHUSA POND, 830 1/2 South Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif. B. P. WILDER, Butterick Building, New York City. G. W. WILDER, Butterick Building, New York City. H. N. WHITNEY & SON, 15 Broad Street, New York City. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.) None. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. 5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the six months preceding the date shown above is. (This information is required from daily publications only.) JAMES F. BIRMINGHAM, Business Manager. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 31st day of March, 1922. (Seal.) CECIL L. WAHL, Notary Public, Kings County, certificate filed New York County. (My commission expires March 30, 1924.) Form 3526.—Ed. 1916.



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Noteworthy Short Stories of 1921

EVERY year the O. Henry Memorial Award Committee, which was created by the Society of Arts and Sciences as a living memorial to America's best beloved short-story writer, selects what in its opinion are the best sixteen short stories published during the year. A first prize of five hundred dollars is awarded, a second of two hundred and fifty, and the other fourteen stories receive honorable mention. All are included in a volume which the memorial committee publishes.

"The Heart of Little Shikara," by Edison Marshall, which appeared in *Everybody's* (January), received the first prize for 1921. Two other *Everybody's* stories—"Mr. Downey Sits Down," by L. H. Robbins (June), and "The Urge," by Maryland Allen (September)—received honorable mention and are included in the O. Henry memorial book.

No other publication except the *Saturday Evening Post*, which has fifty-two issues a year against *Everybody's* twelve, has as many as three stories in that volume.

Everybody's is proud and it believes that its readers will be proud of the fact that such a distinguished jury has given it the credit of recognizing and publishing three of the best short stories of the year. The members of the committee of award are: Blanche Colton Williams, Ph. D., Edward J. Wheeler, Ethel Watts Mumford, Frances Gilchrist Wood and Grove E. Wilson.

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She did not take a single chance. "I've come to tell you I love you," she said. And, oh, what a desperate hurry she seemed to be in to say it!

FROM those mysterious tides of emotion which underlie our lives, making mock of our wisdom and learning, there rises now and then a fine, high-crested wave. And on it rides a tragic soul, destined to laughter and tears and the anguish of the passionate drama. Intense in an instant, melting at a glance, carrying with them all the witchery of the passionate heart—of such are the Nancy Van Wycks of the world.

A FLASH OF GOLD

A New Serial—the Great Human Story of a Woman

By Francis R. Bellamy

Author of "The Balance," of which the "Bookman" said, "Full of charm and rings true."

Illustrations by C. H. Taffs

THE first time David Carpenter ever saw her was that week when Breck Addams published his "Types of Women." She was sitting above him on the little stone balcony of the Clewesbury Country Club, framed by the firelit walls against a background of June stars and dark cedars. And all he could see of her was her ankles—just a pair of trim silken ankles and two delicate pearl-gray slippers.

The next moment she had flicked his cheek with her glove.

"What type am I?" her low voice inquired.

"Why, the dangerous type, of course," he retorted.

"But how do you know?" she persisted.

"Because you're all dangerous."

"Even unknown ones?"

"More so than ever," said he.

"But how do you know who I am?"

"Why, I saw you when I sat down," he retorted. And he got up and sat beside her. There was only one person in Clewesbury, indeed, who could have that look of vivid emotion, as if some enchantress had chosen the softness of youth for an evening of adventure. Nancy Van Wyck!

"But you don't really know me," she was reminding him now. She had wide golden-gray eyes, he noticed, which reflected the firelight like beautiful old vases.

"I know you by hearsay," he retorted.

"That appears to be enough," she remarked.

"Well," he admitted, "Hearsay isn't a pleasant old gentleman."

"What has he got to say about me?" she asked curiously. She looked quite appealing, her hands clasped on her knee, her gray eyes dancing in the firelight.

"Oh, very curious things," he temporized.

"But what?" she demanded imperiously.

"I want to know."

It was the hint of imperiousness that decided him.

"Well," he said, "the horrible red of Aunt Minnie's best kimono. That's the principal one." He paused a moment, puffing his cigarette. "Then, those terrible pieces of pottery in the library——"

She interrupted him.

"That's quite enough," she said. Her cheeks held a perceptible glow. "I didn't think you would be as ill bred as that."

He waved his hand. He could be very exasperating if he wanted to.

"You invited it," he reminded her. "Besides, you flicked me in the face at the beginning. Considered simply as a piece of breeding——"

She was silent for a full minute. Then she raised her dance-program and fanned herself.

"You are quite horrid, aren't you?" she said evenly. There was a tiny point of light in each eye now. Look out, David, for that light! "Quite horrid," she repeated.

He sat back on the stairs as if settled for the evening.

"Well, I try to be," he said cheerfully.

"Why?" She stole a sidelong look at him.

"It makes me more interesting," he confided in her. "A girl as young and attractive and sought-after as you are must meet very few really bang-up, horrid, rotten people."

For an instant she struggled. And then she laughed outright.

"That's not bad, considered simply as a compliment," she said, "though, of course, it's practically all about you."

"My ambition," he admitted.

"Do you know," she said, with charming naïveté, "I thought you would be very serious——"

"And dull," he prompted her. "And old!"

The tiny points of light grew brighter.

"Oh, it wasn't so much the age," she hesitated; "but people with serious ambitions——"

"Don't attack my ideals!" he cried.

"Have you really got some?"

"One or two left," he muttered. "Laid away in lavender."

"I'd give anything just to see them," she said. She looked at her fan demurely. "We have a lovely garden at home, just meant for private discussion." Oh, was there just the faintest hint of flirtation in her voice? "Unless, of course, you're afraid."

"Afraid of what?" he demanded.

"Why, losing your heart to me," she said, with the tiniest of laughs. "Because I never lose mine," she ended disdainfully.

"Never?"

"Never," she answered.

"Then I will certainly come," he said promptly, although his common sense should have told him to jump off the balcony.

And he did. He went in three minutes. And that was the first time he ever saw her.

HE SPECULATED on that rather whimsically, an hour later, as he drove home to Fitzhugh Street in the sweet-scented June night and then went up the dark, elm-shaded driveway into the old-fashioned brick house which had housed the Carpenter family for three generations.

In the parlor to the right, the dim embers of the dying coal fire in the grate—June was cool in this old brick house—threw just a wavering, dim light on the quiet blue carpet, touching with uncertain glow the sofa by the white-framed windows where he had sat winter afternoons as a boy, staring out into the dusk while Aunt Susan sewed. On the mantelpiece the gold clock ticked delicately in its glass prison under the picture of his great-grandfather in the gallant dress of the ruffled Eighteen-twenties. Beneath it there was just visible the scalloped outline of the black-walnut chair where Aunt Hat held forth so vigorously every evening after dinner.

In the parlor beyond, the old-fashioned Morris chair where his grandfather had sat seemed to stare at the severe dining-room, with its silver candlesticks and pictures of Breton fisher-girls returning from the sea. Outside, the elms sighed a little in the breeze and caressed the walls of the house with an unforgettable, soothing sound. And in the upper hall, he knew, the old mahogany clock stood silent, with its hands pointed to quarter to two, as it had ever since he and Aunt Hat and Aunt Susan had sat up-stairs on the day of his grandfather's funeral.

In his own room he turned on the light, a sudden smile on his face. There had just come to him a picture of what these two great-aunts of his would say to his evening's adventure. Susan, of course, would not say much until she had thought the whole thing over. But he could almost hear Aunt Hat's first words. What was the use of picking up a sewer-pipe man's daughter if you didn't have to? At the name "Van Wyck," there always seemed to rise in her mind a picture of vulgar wealth—a stone house on Morpeth Terrace containing all the horrors of the *nouveau riche*, a white-haired, cynical owner, and somewhere, on a davenport, a sensuous creature

who appeared always about to emerge from her clothes. What was the use of bothering with such people when Clewesbury was full of others?

To Aunt Hat, indeed, Clewesbury was still the Clewesbury of sleigh-bells and cutters racing down the sunlit snow of Congress Avenue, of Queen Anne houses and gray-stone sidewalks under chestnut trees, of the yellow coaches of the Lake Shore Southern meeting the horse-cars at the brick station by the lake. There was still grass and a band-stand, so far as she was concerned, in the iron-bound, sky-scraper-shadowed square. Her ideas about people were just as old-fashioned. It made little difference in Clewesbury to-day that Andrew Van Wyck had not been admitted to the Clewesbury Club until he was fifty. It made still less where his daughter was concerned.

IN HIS third-floor room, David suddenly laughed. Why, perhaps this was the result of letting new blood into the exclusive circles of Congress Avenue! You got a real, pulsing, vital human being. Who cared what her father had been?

That conviction still claimed him next morning at breakfast as Aunt Hat fixed him with an inquiring eye.

"Did you like the dance, David?" she asked.

"Why, yes," he said. "I thought it was fun." She was going to open fire in a minute, he told himself. He could tell it!

"I saw you with the Van Wyck girl."

"Yes," he assented.

Aunt Hat began the assault, her mouth compressed, her eyes bright as they peered over her large iron-rimmed spectacles.

"Well, what did she talk about—sewers?"

"Hat!"

Her sister Susan was only mildly reproving. But Hat turned on her at once.

"Well, can't I ask the boy?"

An endless feud, indeed, between his two aunts was this question of how he should be handled—and dating back to dim days he could not remember. He might be thirty-two with medical school behind him, and his office in the same room of the house where his grandfather had once noted down so painstakingly the ailments of his patients. But Aunt Hat and Aunt Susan were still bringing him up.

"Why, as a matter of fact," he said, with

a fine show of carelessness, "as a matter of fact, she is very interesting and quite different."

"Like her mother before her, I suppose," Aunt Hat grunted into her coffee-cup.

"I think she is really quite pretty," Susan murmured.

It was a vigorous eye Hat fixed on her sister.

"Pretty?"

"Well, for that kind," Susan amended at once.

The conversation fell away from David then into some distant room, even some distant clime, while he began on the eggs. Well, for him, she was the incarnation of all that glamour he had known at seventeen in the days of Bragdon's private school. That was what she was! She had all that color and warmth that had faded out of his life since he had put medical college and the gaiety of lower Fifth Avenue behind him. He could not remember when he had had a more interesting evening.

"What time did you get home?" Hat inquired abruptly.

"Oh, about one," he replied.

"Straight from the dance?"

"I took her home," he admitted.

"Oh!" said Aunt Hat.

Sudden rashness seized David.

"In fact, I'm going to call on her tonight," he said boldly. "I found her very attractive."

"Yes, indeed—for that kind," Susan agreed, after a pause.

Yes; and for any kind, David told himself, as he took himself out to the office and prepared for the day. There was no reason why he shouldn't go to see her. It was amusing, of course, to reflect that he had escaped falling in love all these years only to fall so suddenly. But there was nothing remarkable in it. There had been no time for serious consideration of girls in those gay years in New York, those years of midnight sallies into lower Fifth Avenue, of suppers at Murray's and the Brevoort with that joyous, irrepressible group which he and Bat Morrison had gathered about them. The lecture-rooms and clinics had been the real thing in existence in those days. And ahead had loomed the prospect of being an interne in the big brick hospital out Cuyahoga Avenue. What was the use of seriously considering a girl?

When he had come back to town and started in at the General Hospital, they had welcomed him warmly; but he had dropped out of things gradually. His hospital work had left him no time for amateur theatricals or afternoon riding clubs. And then this new generation of Nancy's had come along, mixing in with the old crowd until an evening at the Clewesbury Club dances had resembled very little those days when Beau Stoddard and the white-haired mothers had watched his little set of young people dance.

Of a sudden, Clewesbury had seemed large—merely dotted here and there with houses which he knew. The office in the ell of the house had filled with patients winter afternoons. And his evenings had changed slowly to out-patient work for the Brotherhood House down on Kerrigan Street, and midnight hours with Barrie and Stevenson up in the third-floor room, while downstairs Aunt Hat and Aunt Susan discussed Bernard Shaw with old Mrs. Salmon from across the street.

He had grown away from youthful society and the little crowds of débutantes who came out in ever-increasing numbers each fall. He had not even known Nancy Van Wyck by sight until Breck pointed her out, although he had heard her name many times. Aunt Hat was right in that way. He really did not know what she might be like inside.

He pondered that with his first touch of seriousness as he got out his motor after dinner and drove across town toward Morpeth Terrace.

Breck had described her, of course, as a gray-eyed young barbarian who would conquer him at a glance. But Breck was always cynical if there was any humor to be derived from the mood. He had not mentioned her odd little tricks of voice and gesture, or the charming whimsicality that peeped out of her eyes. Why, he himself hadn't seen any one who attracted him the way she did since that night, ten years before, when he and Breck had broken the statue of the Venus de Milo out at Jonathan Edmunds' at Élise's coming-out party—and he had kissed the girl from the West! He couldn't remember her name now.

The reflection held him silent as he turned down the parklike length of Morpeth Terrace and went up the Van Wyck drive

through the little side entrance in the hedge. A kind of fairy-land the garden was just at that instant—the gray-stone house a palace of sunset shadows, with one orange light in a casement window, and at the foot of the lawn the hollyhocks standing like ghosts beneath the foliage of the elms. But he had no eyes for it. He was only wondering if perhaps Nancy's attractions would fade in the same manner as had those of the girl from the West.

A moment later he knew.

She was standing on the brick terrace, staring at the sunset-slashed pergola, with its background of darkening lawn and black trees.

"Don't you want to stay outside?" she asked him.

"Why, yes," he assented.

And three hours later they were still out.

She was the most attractive thing in the world.

FROM the corner of the palace of shadows where Andrew Van Wyck sat at midnight, the room appeared plunged in gloom save for the dapple of light from the Persian lamp at his elbow. A sort of oasis of color, that spot was—revealing the black fire-tongs and the huge jade vase beside the dim, high fireplace, the brilliant bindings of books on the shelves just behind him, and leaving in darkness the rest of the room, except for the far side, where tiny, slanting squares of moonlight stole in through the French windows from the lawn.

A quiet time in the Morpeth Terrace house, these two hours from ten until twelve, and well fitted for filling the gaps in a self-gotten education. A man had only so much time in his life!

The reflection brought a peculiar look of satisfaction into Van Wyck's cold gray eyes. Deep-set eyes they were, beneath heavy white brows, giving an odd touch of power, of force to the heavy face with its leatherlike skin and thick jaw.

Time——

Well, he had never wasted it, he reflected, even if there were things he did not know in Roman history, in Thomas Aquinas, in Adam Smith. His Adam Smith had been the farmers' market beside the old Eagle Hotel and the *Fireside Weekly* on the red-covered table evenings under the kerosene-lamp. His Thomas Aquinas had been the

swinging shadows in the horse-barn late winter afternoons, the unpainted one-room schoolhouse at Martins Corners. His Roman history, too, had been the dull brick-kilns on Baden Street and the rickety rooming-house along the railroad tracks three blocks away.

He had had time for nothing but work from the day when he had got his first job in Clewesbury until the afternoon when he had had the little red frame office decorated with the sign—done in gold—"Clewesbury Potteries, A. J. Van Wyck, Proprietor," and had brought Marie down to look at it.

Marie!

The name always seemed to bring a sudden hush into the quiet library. Like a flash of gold in a man's journey, turning to rust in his hands—to love a woman like that! Nothing Andrew Van Wyck had ever done had meant anything to Marie. Herself—and what she could get out of every man whom she met. That had been Marie's way, for all of her drooping lashes and gray eyes and that figure like a beautiful vase. She had not even cared enough for her own child to take it with her when she had left Andrew Van Wyck.

He had found the little thing eating supper alone with the old black cat when he had come home from the potteries. And beside her had been the note, left carelessly on the littered kitchen table. Hadn't been happy! Couldn't stand it! Knew she was wrong, but Hempel gave her what he could not—and she would leave him the child. That had been in the note Marie had left behind.

IN THE midnight library, Andrew Van Wyck stared steadily, unseeingly at the squares of moonlight on the floor. Well, he had done his best by the child, anyhow. He had not hired a nurse and let it go at that. He had kept at Minnie until she had come and taken charge of her. A curious little thing she had been at first, too, full of ardent enjoyment of every passing moment, full of odd traits that caught at a man's throat, unselfish as the day was long. If it had not been for those infatuations she had developed at fourteen, he might even have cared for her. But those affairs had killed all that. She had been the dead image of her mother then, even to the way her eyes had drooped when she spoke of the boy across the street.

And then it had seemed almost as if she had suddenly recollected Marie, and resolved to adopt her every gesture and tone of voice in an effort to enhance the likeness. The resemblance had become startling. The endless questions about ideas and desires, too, as she had come into girlhood and asked the reason for every living thing there was.

Somehow, his heart had failed him. His energy had not seemed up to the struggle after a day spent in the Van Wyck Building down-town. She would go to the devil, anyway, as soon as she learned the ways of the world. What was the sense of struggling against that?

In the midnight library, Andrew Van Wyck frowned as the sound of laughter from the pergola invaded the room. She was evidently entertaining another caller to-night. She looked attractive enough to the casual eye, no doubt. She was attractive, too, in her way—whenever that cursed trait of her mother's did not appear, trailing its shadow over everything she did. But she was no good with that thing in her. Why, in God's name, couldn't she see it, and control herself and act like every other girl? Bitterness flooded his heart as he stared at the floor.

This room was the measure of his disappointment. Those Persian jars, those Chinese porcelains, those Egyptian blue glazes gleaming here in the darkness, those red Samian bowls, too, speaking of vanished imperial Rome, those fantastic Peruvian vessels on the high shelves, the exquisite Japanese vases standing out with dream-like delicacy against the dull green of Indian faience, the somber purple of Damascus bowls, the golden sheen of Malaga ware—

Why, this library was like a room filled with the dreams of the past brought face to face with the present. These jars and lamps and rows of dinner-services and cups from the Clewesbury potteries—why, they brought up all the sweep of his life's endeavor; white-clay beds in Cornwall, tall chimneys in Ohio, the banked fires in the kilns across the river, the cheap-crockery stores of the West, with their ninety-nine-cent signs and their assorted china. They held all the work and sweat and hell of building the Clewesbury Potteries—icy dawns in Kansas towns, with the trans-continental pounding across the prairie at

four-thirty on her way to the Coast, the drummers asleep in the smoker; breathless hot noons in the sample-rooms of St. Louis and Chicago hotels, with the buyers wrangling over prices amid the heavy smoke of cigars; tense days at ceramic conventions in sweaty Pittsburgh, fighting the trade with all the sleepless nights that meant— And Dennis back home all the while, keeping those kilns always going, going, while he fought the unions to a standstill.

Pottery, more pottery, and keep down the costs!

Why, this white-haired Van Wyck could almost hear the cheery voice of the blue-eyed Irishman in his library now of nights. And Dennis had been dead ten years. And it had all never meant one thing to Marie. And it would never mean anything at all to her child.

IN THE dim room, Andrew Van Wyck relighted his cigar, holding the flaming match aloft abruptly at the sound of swift steps upon the grass—breaking the silence of the night—aware of a sudden that some one was standing in the doorway. An instant later he made out her form, instinct with youth and life.

"Hello!" she said.

"Hello!" he replied.

No; he had nothing to say to her, he realized, as she made herself comfortable on the divan. And she was his daughter! He fumbled uncomfortably in his mind.

"Well, just what sort of world-beater is this one?" he inquired at last, a curious, cynical humor filling his voice. She had a good sense of humor, anyway.

"This one?" she repeated.

"The caller." He stared at her steadily.

"Oh," she said, "I don't know." She seemed oddly vivid, emotional.

"Which one was this?" he inquired.

"David Carpenter," she said.

"Is he the next victim?"

Her eyes became deep pools.

"Why, I just met him last night," she remonstrated lightly. "We're only friends."

"Won't he be anything more?"

She half smiled.

"Oh, he might," she confessed whimsically.

"He will!" retorted Mr. Van Wyck. He would! They were all a clay-footed lot in the presence of her pretty face. Confound

it! Why wasn't there ever one to give her a jolt, a taste of her own medicine, to show her she couldn't forever play fast and loose? This young Carpenter was probably just like the others, blind as a bat, and taken in by her actions and her rotten, appealing manner.

"God help him!" he said. "He's got my sympathy."

It was a curious silence that invaded the library.

"Don't you think I am ever sincere?" the girl asked. Her hands had clenched themselves about one knee.

"Sincere? Why, hell," said Mr. Van Wyck, "you don't know what sincerity is!" A born grand-stand artist, this daughter of his! She was always acting some emotional drama—probably just come in from acting one now, out in the garden with this David Carpenter. Of course she wasn't sincere.

"Perhaps I could get Dave to teach me sincerity," she was saying mockingly now.

"If he wants to!"

"Do you think he can resist?" She thrust out a pair of charming young ankles and stared at them with just a trace of a smile.

"I hope to God he does!"

"So do I—a little!" she cried. She had thrown in her voice now all the odd intonation of flirtation—a sound that roused harsh, jangling echoes from the past for Andrew Van Wyck. He rose, his temper flaming.

"All right," he said. "Go to the devil in your own way, Nan. Perhaps you'll learn then." He fumbled with his cigars upon the table, closing the humidor with a bang, a little blur before his eyes. "Only, don't come and ask me for sympathy afterward—do you hear?"

There was—there was no dealing with such a person!

He got half-way to the hall, indeed, before his full thought secured utterance. His eyes flashed then as he turned abruptly and took the cigar from his lips.

"There's a hell of a burn in that fire you play with," he said indistinctly. "Your mother got hers. Maybe you'll get yours this time."

She looked like one of those nymphs the artists in the potteries were always copying, he thought as he ascended the stairs. And she wasn't! She was just like her mother.

By God, he should have shot Marie that first time, and the thing would have ended there. The girl was a little devil.

SHE was rather a queer little devil, nevertheless—if you had asked her opinion—as she went slowly up the broad stairs and turned on the lamp in her blue bedroom overlooking the garden.

Yes; there was an irresistible fascination for her about a little—oh, just a little flirtation, she admitted to herself as she stood there. Like the mystery of dusk, like fresh, blowing winds on sunset waters, like the sweet sound of violins, the wonder of the thing was to her. A nod of the head, a catch of the breath, a tiny modulation in tone, and one was off for exquisite adventure. It was like carrying round a little theatre wherein one could choose one's part and scenery at any moment—and the drama began! It could not be analyzed any more than could a melody from "Pelléas and Mélisande."

And yet surely it did not have anything to do with this breathless sweetness which had filled her at David's embrace. None of her other adventures had ever made her feel like this one to-night. Sunset waters or the sound of violins were nothing compared to this. It had seemed incredible. She had only used on him the same methods which she had used on Tuffy Warner in the Alhambra and on Doug Everdell in the tea-house out Congress Avenue—and he had fallen, of course! But with what different results for her! Why, tenderness and emotion had swept over her like a tidal wave, beating on her heart until she had ruined everything.

She had not humbled him at all. Instead of being angry, she had wanted him to kiss her again; she had wanted to stay in his arms. She had had all she could do to tear herself from his embrace and run unseeing across the garden into the house, leaving him alone under the moon.

In the silence of the room, broken only by the sound of the foolish June-bugs banging on the screens, she sat down on the bed, sudden fear in her heart. Was this the Thing which Aunt Minnie was always warning her against? That Thing which her mother had had, which lay hidden in you as in a low, dark room, only waiting to come out and take you by the throat? It was a very strange Thing. It cast a glamour over

new faces and filled old ones with curious madness. Its possessors were always despised of women. It was the cause of the downfall of half the human race. And yet it hid behind an indefinable charm. It was a gift from heaven, according to Dr. Musson. And it was the basis of all achievement, so Breck Addams had said. Was it possible that it had still one more attribute—irresistible sweetness?

There was no such thing as love, her father said. It was only the name fools gave to desire. She stopped undoing her hair at that, a tiny shadow in her eyes. Why was it that he always got so excited and talked about hell and her mother—and swore? The only clear recollection she had of him on Baden Street was just the same—sitting by the lamp after dinner, brooding over mystery, and peculiarly angered by simple questions. He had had this same sarcastic, hateful tone then, when you asked him the reason for things. Only old Maggie had seemed to understand why you felt close to tears when the lamps on the street began to shine and the motors hummed beneath the trees, so shiny and distinct against the purple-black evening sky.

"Rot—like her mother talked!" Aunt Minnie had said. And her father, "Stick to facts, Nancy."

"Facts," she had gathered, were what old Edmunds was getting out of St. Peter's to make him give it so much money, the real reasons why old Wilson made so many trips to New York without his old woman, the hypocrisy of Dr. Brewster, of St. Luke's, pretending to champion the poor so as to get a good job in politics.

A house of cynicism—that was what her father had made of this Morpeth Terrace house—a place where every one's motives were looked on with suspicion and each person kept his thoughts to himself. The realization of that had struck her almost with the force of a blow when she had come home from the boarding-school overlooking the Hudson. Just a place to sit in and keep one's thoughts to oneself. That was why she had given more of herself in two evenings to David Carpenter than she had to her father all her life. Why need her father be so unpleasant over that result?

She put out the lamp and stood an instant in her night-dress, looking out over the moonlit garden, aware of tiny imps in her

conscience pointing at her reproachfully. Well, perhaps that had not been the whole reason why he had been so unpleasant. She admitted that unwillingly to herself. He had meant Tuffy Warner and Doug Everdell—and the others. He had meant the way flirtation always led her to conquest—and then to dismissal. It was true that they no longer interested her once the excitement of conquest was over. Afterward, there was always a strange hatred of herself in her heart, a hatred of the whole thing, a desire to end it all and never see the man again.

But what would her father have? Would he have her the slave of every attractive man that came along? There was nothing unfair about the game. Did not he himself play his game always alone, giving his confidence to no one? She but used his own rules for herself.

Why could not David take care of himself? Why should he need any one's sympathy?

Perhaps she herself would need the sympathy this time. After that kiss in the garden she had not sent *him* away!

SHE woke to a mood of contrition next morning, and took herself to Kitty Sassoon's for luncheon, only to find that young lady's mother at home, and no opportunity for private discussion. She ventured only one question.

"Do you think it's wrong," she asked Mrs. Sassoon, "to kiss a man you aren't engaged to?"

To which Mrs. Sassoon replied,

"I shouldn't think you would want to."

Which seemed to dispose of that.

It didn't dispose of it, however, she told herself at the *matinée*, while she pretended to watch the stage and the unprofitable acting upon it. She would give anything to have David kiss her again, whether they were engaged or not. That seemed to have the same attraction for her that flirtation had seemed to have before. The only question, of course, was: Was she going to want to kiss every man she flirted with after this? Or was it just David she wanted? He was really sweet. She would not want to hurt him, somehow. He would probably want to kiss her again to-night.

Just what should she do about that?

She was still trying to decide, three hours

later, as she came down the broad stairs, a vision in black and gold, and went lightly into the drawing-room to meet David. He sensed her restraint at once.

"Am I in disgrace?" he asked steadily.

"Anything but that," she confessed.

"I thought—I felt—" he began and stopped. He lit a cigarette to cover the confusion which had come to him, absurdly conscious of the graceful outline of her figure outlined against the old rose of the divan.

"Please let's not discuss ourselves," she said.

"Why, what's the matter with us?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing," she admitted, after a tiny pause. "Only, last night is an awful muddle in my mind."

"A pleasant muddle—" he began.

"No; a real one," she said. She stared down at her hands. "I think I am crazy sometimes. What on earth did you think of me?"

"I thought you were adorable," he said unhesitatingly.

She blushed vividly, hotly—and then looked at him with unexpected directness.

"That's because you don't know me," she said.

"That's easily remedied," he laughed.

"Maybe," she admitted seriously.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I think I ought to tell you about myself," she said.

Unexpected seriousness came to him—a seriousness which he covered with the armor of bravado.

"Your dark and terrible past?" he inquired.

"No," she said. "Just the way I am; so you won't—won't be deceived. I'm funny, you know. I'm not what I look. And I want you to understand about last night—the flirtation and everything, so you won't be hurt."

"I won't be hurt," he assured her, although the sudden steadiness of his eyes cast some doubt on that statement.

"I just want to stop—I don't want to go on," she said.

"Why, of course," he said evenly. So this was what had warned him of a change in her the moment she had entered the room! He had been a fool, of course—in the garden, and ever since.

"It isn't because I don't want to!" she cried abruptly. There was something in his attitude that had caught at her heart. "It isn't that!"

Mystification took hold of him.

"Well, why?" he asked slowly. He was trying to be fair.

"It's because I've always been funny," she said swiftly. "I remember down on Baden Street I adored the druggist on the corner. I wore some black on my skirt when his wife died and hoped he would notice me. And I liked Georgie Hazleton, across the street, here, when we first came. I couldn't see enough of him. I was crazy about Doug for a while, too. And Tuffy—" She lifted herself from the pillows of the divan. "Don't you see what I mean?"

"Not unless you mean I'm a passing fancy." He was trying to be light.

"It's because I'm afraid you will be!" she cried.

"But why should you be worried?" he inquired.

She looked at him just an instant, while a blush slowly mounted into her cheeks.

"Because," she said bravely, "I never was crazy about any one in this way before—and I'm—I'm afraid——"

Well, just what she was afraid of was never named. For it was the first glimpse David had of the fact that Nancy cared for him. And only for an instant could he repress the tenderness that welled up into his throat. An instant later he had her in his arms.

"You are perfectly sweet, Nan!" he said huskily. And he caught her to him and kissed her. "I love you," he said.

THAT was the day, in Clewesbury, of the romance of business. Speeches at City Club luncheons, editorials in prominent papers, sermons from fashionable pulpits—all testified to the glamour of that, even without the evidence which the Chamber of Commerce, with its gallery of impressionistic pictures, supplied.

Glimpses of romantic high lights in Clewesbury those pictures were which hung on the marble walls of the building on the square—the South Clewesbury rolling-mills at night, white flashes of steel illuminating the clouds; the Pennsylvania yards at sunset, heavy, gray freight trains rumbling eastward into the red-and-green-dotted dusk;

the Baden Street potteries at dawn, thin trickles of smoke from the slumbering kilns crawling toward the sky; disgorging hour beside the Lewisohn garment factories, cheerful-faced crowds of workmen streaming from the greenish light of the buildings—sixty per cent. more efficient than incandescents, the circular said—streaming into the dusk of the winter's night.

All the wonder of Paris in May, of London in June, of the Riviera in February crowded into the romance of Clewesbury's industries—the drama of achievement, the fairy-tale of business. Why, it was only a hundred years since the first settler had decided the river gorge was too steep to climb and had staked out his claim, writing to his family back in York state to come by boat in the spring.

Was there any one who could deny the romance of a hundred years of progress?

Only on Kerrigan Street, perhaps, was there a murmur against it. Yes; a striking series of pictures, no doubt—those high lights of Clewesbury—and bearing out with the emphasis of genius, if not truth, the story the carved letters round the high frieze of the chamber spelled: "Commerce is the Carrier of Civilization." But just when had the Lewisohn garment factories disgorged that crowd with the cheerful faces? Into the bitter cold of the March strike? Commerce the Carrier of Civilization, too! Was it? Or did Commerce carry these long lines of tenements round the world, and call them "civilization."

That was the low murmur of Kerrigan Street as it pondered the romance harshly, vulgarly, ignorantly—in the light of its corner saloons and ten-cent movies and its inescapable materialism. There was no romance in A. J. Van Wyck or Isaac Lewisohn, the murmur pointed out; none in the Baden Street potteries or the South Clewesbury rolling-mills. No romance, or civilization, either. Just production. No voice of labor or humanity was heard behind those grim gates, any more than in the marble Chamber of Commerce hall where labor stood outside while wealth alone spoke to amiable business men in the voice of Andrew Van Wyck, and the papers called it America's own.

That was it—wealth! Money dominated, while no doubt disturbed the pleasant conceptions of romance and progress round the

tables at luncheon. Why, romance was dollars! And civilization was wider markets! And human labor was merely the pigment prodigal artists splashed so recklessly to produce these masterpieces of romance. Before God, who could say differently who lived on Kerrigan Street?

That was the murmur of Kerrigan Street.

David heard it, a little uncomfortably, in those calls he made for the Brotherhood House on Kerrigan Street beyond Pollock's bar. He tried to tell Breck Addams about it, too, at those noonday lunches they talked over in the Lotos Club. But that gentleman was not to be sidetracked by such minor affairs.

"The point is," said he, "have you fallen in love with her yet? Because if you haven't, you will." He drank his coffee reflectively. "She is the perfect barbarian." He gazed at David quizzically. "Have you seen old Van Wyck yet? I hear he lifts out the suitors by the seat of their pants."

"I'm no suitor," said David.

"You're the worst one of the lot," retorted Breck, "because you're old enough to know better."

"I'll marry her if she'll have me," said David.

"Great Scott!" said Breck.

"The difficulty is that she can't make up her mind."

"Oh, I see," remarked Breck, with his first touch of seriousness. "Well, here's luck, old man, anyhow!"

"Thanks!" said David.

He had known her just a month by that time, and the summer of romance had started. Like an imperfect kaleidoscope of love and intimacy, that month had been, overshadowed and confused by Nancy's doubts, made bearable only by her gradual confession of love. It was love, no matter how much she refused to give it its name.

He had had that proved to him a hundred times. Evenings up on the roof-garden of the Pontiac, when they had danced together hour after hour, while beneath the balustrade Clewesbury stretched like some dream city of romance; afternoons down by the lake shore, when they had motored to some secluded, wooded point to enjoy an hour of the "Golden Age," a picnic and a sunset beside the refreshing blue water; evenings out at the country club, when they had dined out beneath the whispering August

trees and gone to the dances at the Georgian afterward, while Breck and Kitty Sassoon and the rest of the younger set had looked on with amusement and perhaps a touch of envy. Love had always been the one clear chord to which their emotional symphony had resolved itself in the end. When would Nancy admit it?

ANDREW VAN WYCK woke up toward the end of the summer. A kind of gentleness—or was it absent-mindedness?—seemed to hang about his daughter lately, accompanied by a tendency to color vividly when the telephone-bell rang. Why was that? Was this doctor seriously capturing her fancy? There were queer streaks in her. An impulsive moment, and she might wake to find herself with a missionary bound for China or the South Seas—or Kerrigan Street—provided the man was attractive enough.

In the candle-lit blue-hung dining-room, with its Chinese vases and leaded-glass windows, he took occasion to satisfy his curiosity.

"Well, Nan, are you going to marry this one?" he asked.

"I don't know—I might," she told him.

He lit his cigar with great care.

"I passed him to-day down on Kerrigan Street by the Brotherhood House. Is he one of these society reformers?"

"Why, I don't know," Nancy told him, with a glance of surprise. "I never asked him."

"Good God!" said Andrew Van Wyck.

No; she wasn't going to run off with him, he decided, if she didn't know that much about him. She was not a complete damn fool. She was probably only giving him the tortures a little longer than usual before giving him the sack. That was all there was to it. Her color was probably health.

"She don't mean anything," he told his sister Minnie.

It was one of the few times in his life, however, that Mr. Van Wyck underrated the intentions of his daughter. For there were some decidedly serious intentions in Nancy by that time. Why, David was perfectly enthralling, she was telling herself with little thrills of remembrance. She did not care if she never saw any other man. Why did she not forget everything? What would it matter if she did not last?



"Nan," he said deliberately, "this has got to stop." She turned swiftly. "What has?" she asked. "This flirtation stuff!" he said angrily. "There's only one name for the sort of woman you'll be if you go on!"

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She could not spoil any one's happiness so long as she wasn't married. Surely, this was love that she felt.

She was wondering about that, unknown to David, all through September as the sunsets came earlier and earlier, and evening came to Morpeth Terrace with a touch of chill in the air.

She had quite decided it, indeed, on that December evening when they sat together up in the balcony of the new marble Chamber of Commerce Building, listening to the speeches and self-congratulations by which Jonathan Edmunds and Andrew Van Wyck and Karl Heinrichs dedicated the opening of their new temple of Commerce.

"Don't you say we cut the Everdells and stay home to-night?" she whispered to him in the pauses.

"By all means," he told her.

And an hour later they were on their way up-town.

THERE was that look of infinite softness in her gray eyes to-night, he noticed—that look which had appeared more and more lately as if endless tenderness possessed her. He felt her mood indefinably as he started the log fire in the high, dim fireplace in the library and she made herself comfortable on the divan before it. Perhaps she was beginning really to love him and admit it to herself.

The thought started a little tremble in him as he sat down beside her on the shadowy divan. He had not pressed her about that subject in several weeks now. He had kept putting it off because of the plain danger it held. This sweet intimacy of theirs would end so abruptly—and so finally, if she did at last say "No." And yet the thing was an endless desire with him—just the longing to hear her say she loved him.

"Do you love me, Nan," he asked, "yet?"

In the soft light of the fire her gray eyes turned to dark pools.

"Yes," she said.

Just one word it was, too. But what tides of passion there can be beneath a word! A simple good-night phrase said in soft tones, and a golden tide sets in toward a sunset coast, swirling sands of untold fortune. For an instant David could hardly believe his ears. And then a wave of happiness and unbelievable emotion went rolling mountain-high through his heart.

"Nan!" he said. And he kissed her.

"I love you to death," she said. And she drew him to her.

"Aunt Hat was asking me again to-day if we weren't engaged," he told her with a smile as she nestled in his arms. "She doesn't think our relations are quite decent."

"That's pleasant!" Soft irony in Nancy.

"Even Aunt Susan is a little worried, I think." He twisted a stray strand of Nancy's hair, as if to show his new ownership. And then a new light came in his eyes. "When do you want to be married, Nan?"

"Oh, I don't know," she said slowly.

"Soon?" She shook her head. "Or late?" he queried.

"Maybe." She seemed dimly troubled.

"Just maybe!" he mocked her in half-humorous surprise.

"Do we have to talk about marriage?"

"Well, we'll have to some time," he pointed out. "There's your father, and Aunt Hat—and——"

"I know." She looked at him for a moment, odd emotion in her eyes, as she curled herself up on the divan. "But, please, couldn't we just forget all about marriage?"

In the firelight she made a picture of unforgettable appeal, the tiny line of brown fur on her blue-velvet dress bringing out the delicate flush of her skin round the throat—a picture that would have made David forget ten thousand marriage discussions had it not occurred to him that possibly she might be serious.

"Well, I don't think we could be quite as naive as that," he told her humorously. "Not in Clewesbury. Society might object."

"Oh, bother society!" she said.

It did not seem quite credible to him, nevertheless.

"It would be pleasanter to marry," he remarked tentatively.

"Not in the end, perhaps," she said somberly.

Like a dagger that remark was, plunged into David's heart, driving out all humor.

"Are you really serious, Nan?" he asked.

She cast down her eyes in strange embarrassment.

"Yes," she said. "I don't think I am made for—for marriage, Dave."

"Do you mean that you don't really love me after all?" he asked steadily.

She sat up indignantly.

"How can you say that?"

"But I should think you would want to marry me if you did," he said.

"Why?"

For an instant the question confused him.

"Because you wouldn't want anything else," he told her then.

She turned toward him, pushing away his arms, her eyes bright with sudden pride.

"Why?" she asked. "Isn't it enough to own me completely?"

Conviction came to his rescue at that.

"Not in our world, Nan," he said.

She sank down on her knees on the hearth.

"You don't love me—not the real me—you don't, or you wouldn't make me. You know how I am—how my—my mother was before me. I've told you. I don't last—the way marriage does." Her voice trailed off. "I'm not made for marriage."

"But don't you see, Nan dear?" he asked.

"Don't you see that it isn't what I want——"

She cut him off at once.

"I don't see anything," she cried, "except that you keep insisting that it isn't enough to love me for myself! You think we have got to be married. Very well then, give me up! Don't love me! I don't compel you, you know."

"But you must see what I mean, Nan," he said. Just because he did love her, he could never begin anything that would bring down ruin on her in the end. Clewesbury knew no exceptions to that inexorable law. She must see that. "Don't you?" he asked again.

"You haven't left any doubt about it," she answered coldly. If he did not want her above everything else, indeed, why did he not go and leave her alone? He would never have an opportunity to spurn her again. She would see to that. Perhaps this was the result of forgetting to play the game, of discarding the imps of conquest and their weapons, of giving way to emotion. "Love itself seems quite immaterial to you!" she cried.

"It's only because I love you that I do want it my way, Nan," he said.

"But you can't have me now!" she cried.

"You don't mean that," he said. His face was quite white.

"I do!" she flung at him. "You are hateful!"

Well, in a soberer moment she might not have said just that. But there was always a kind of passion in her to have what she wanted—an intensity of desire that could brook no denial. Emotion was always the whole world to her. And it was that tone in her voice that stung him.

"I guess it is time that I went, then, Nan," he said, with an odd sort of dignity in his tall frame. After all, she could not expect to taunt him forever and get no answering flash.

"If that is the way you feel," she said.

"I'm afraid it is," he said, with a curious straightening of his shoulders. He turned and walked steadily across the dim library to where his hat and coat lay on the old carved table by the door. He put them on with queer mechanical movements.

"Good-night, Nan," he said. He did not want to go, of course.

But she did not answer. She did not even turn round.

"Good-night," he said again.

And he turned rather slowly and went out.

She had not even looked up from the fire. Only, her face had gone rather white. She had not loved him, of course. After all of those months——

Anguish came to him in the clear, cold night. And he got in his motor. He had lost her.

HOW curiously pride can shape our lives, although we may not realize it at the time! To the end of her days, Nancy always considered that it was her knowledge of her own character which kept her from calling David back that very night. And yet it was really pride against which she struggled—pride against which she could make no headway, pride which insisted on delay, which whispered that, if she simply waited, he would come back.

She could think of nothing else during those first moments when she lay on the divan, tiny drops of water on her eyes, in her heart the sudden, terrifying realization that they had quarreled. Cynicism came an hour later—the cynicism of the palace of shadows—as she lay awake in her dim bedroom, watching from beneath the warm comforter the little swirls of snow as they danced on the window-panes and fell in little clouds on the sill.

Well, she had been too nice to David

from the beginning. She had told him everything she felt—all her doubts and emotions and temptations. She had never treated him the way she had the others. But her father had been right after all. It did not pay to be fair, not even with David—not with anybody in the world. No one could stand the truth. She should have promised to marry him and said nothing; and thrown him over in the end if she found that love did not last—the way every other girl probably did. Who could promise emotion for eternity?

Engagement, and marriage, too, were simply terms, names, with which to mollify this intangible thing called "society," so that one could love as much as one pleased. If one wanted love in this world of society, evidently one had to take marriage. She had made her mistake because she had told the real truth—that love did not last with her. She would have to admit that only to herself—and reopen the campaign.

That was the only clear idea she had as she went to the dinners and evening parties that marked the height of the winter season, and waited for the moment when she and David would meet. She did not realize how odd it was that she did not run across him during any of those evenings. Not until long afterward did she know the real reason. But then she saw how ridiculously simple the explanation had been. David had not gone—

Like some masquerade of pain, indeed, those first few weeks had seemed to him—some masque in which the scenes of the passionate summer appeared and reappeared in endlessly changing guise, but reminding him always of vanished happiness—a curious recognition in him of some dim truth lying behind Nancy's position—and yet a clearer perception of the impossibility of acceding to it. No; he had stated the thing as it really was to her before the fire. If he gave her the slightest opportunity, she would break down his strength and he would deny his own belief. Each pang of longing for her was really only one more argument why he should never see her again.

Not until three weeks had passed, however, and he had neither seen her nor heard from her, did he fully realize that they had really quarreled and definitely broken off.

Well, it was enough, he told himself, with a touch of bitterness which he could not

quite restrain. It was enough to teach him a lesson, anyway—enough to teach him that he was a fool to expect to attract any young girl. He had better leave them alone. He was no longer a boy.

He himself and Breck were almost the only ones who weren't married now. And even Breck had accomplished more than he had. Breck had finally gotten his "Types of Women" published as his first step away from the office of the *Clewesbury Press* into the paths of literature—had done it, too, despite his flippancy and butterfly dancing on Congress Avenue. Only he himself had done literally nothing toward realizing that "aristocracy of achievement" of which they had talked so lengthily—until the beer ran out—at college.

It was to have been art and science applied for a glorious mankind, he remembered—not for the money in it, but for the happiness to be shared, the achievement to be piled up. That had been its general conception. And for him it had turned into this office on Fitzhugh Street, with its little daily string of patients, and his two industrial concerns, the Acme Tire Company and the Champlain Motor Works, and his work in the children's dispensary for the Brotherhood House on Kerrigan Street and the free hour at the General Hospital. There wasn't much difference between his practise and Tom Harding's or Billy Kanter's, except that Tom worked the hotels for all they were worth and Billy made the foreigners pay cash before he would unwrap their bandages. Congress Avenue's undercurrent had swept him along just as unresistingly as it had any of the others who took life as it came.

Wasn't it about time that he gave some thought to his life?

IT WAS that mood in which Miss Haynes' letter found him the next morning.

DEAR DR. CARPENTER:

We have at last secured the necessary money and we are going to have a real dispensary. Only you can really know what that means to us. We have seen the need for it so long, in spite of the fine help you and the other men have always given us out at the General Hospital. No more hit or miss! Isn't it splendid?

My letter isn't to sing a paean of joy, however. It is to ask you if you won't consider taking charge of it for us. You are so well fitted for the work, and we have all grown to know you so well both here on Kerrigan Street and at the hospital that we

realize your friendship and courtesy. Won't you do it?

I won't add another word. I know what Kerrigan Street means. I have tried to tell you our vision in the few talks I have had with you. But I don't want to influence you in the least if you have other ambitions. But—just let me know that you will take it. Devotedly yours,
ELSA HAYNES.

P. S. Yes; there is a salary.

A long time David sat with that letter in his hand, staring out at the sidewalks and bare chestnut trees of Fitzhugh Street, aware of an odd sense of fate.

Well, this was a challenge in a way, a sort of test of his sincerity. A dream pursued steadily and unflinchingly since boarding-school days—that was what the buildings of the Brotherhood House really represented—a dream made into reality by the indomitable will and vision of little Miss Haynes with her strong hands and humorous eyes. But he had no dreams. He was content simply to float along the fringes of the dreams of others, not really helping or hindering, simply drifting and pretending he was better than the rest.

No crushing burden of poverty upon him, no necessity for the eternal struggle to keep the wolf away which took most of the strength and courage of the workaday world—no reason of that kind why he should not accept a work of this sort, no vital necessity that called to him to stay in Fitzhugh Street, either. There were plenty of doctors to look after Congress Avenue. Only one reason against doing what he could to push on Miss Haynes' enterprise, so far as he could see—because Kerrigan Street would not mean tennis in summer or the horse show in the fall or the dances at the Clewesbury Club in the winter. Or Nancy Van Wyck!

Because it would cost him something!

THAT was it. It had cost Miss Haynes something to refuse to conform to the drift of her day—to insist on following out her vision. It would cost him something to go down on Kerrigan Street, just as it had cost somebody something for every step of progress the world had ever taken. It would prove whether he was sincere or not, or just another of the talkers of which the world was weary to the soul.

Three days of rather ironical indecision he spent over that, and then he met Breck at luncheon at the Lotos Club.

"Hello, old dreamer!" that aristocrat said in the pleasant dimness of the grill. "Engaged?"

"No," said David.

"By George—not married?"

"Far from it."

It was a sigh of relief that issued from Breck then.

"We'll just have the regular lunch"—to the waiter. And, to David, curiously, "What's on your mind?"

"Merely an offer," that individual retorted.

He told him haltingly, keeping Nancy out of the recital with difficulty, while Breck scanned the regular menu and called grandly for the wine-card. He then stared at David with quizzical humor in his eyes.

"And what becomes of little Nan Van Wyck if our doctor goes to living on Kerrigan Street?" he asked.

"Oh, I guess she'll live through it," David said slowly.

He hurried to side-track the subject. There was something about his quarrel with Nancy that did not seem to lend itself to confidence.

"You see, Breck," he said, "the trouble is that people come to a doctor with their troubles. And we usually don't hear them at all—humanly, I mean. We see—diagnosis, treatment, prescription. We don't see the rest. A man's wife in the anteroom, wondering what she will do with the child if she had to go to work now that her husband has broken down. We just say, 'Rest, open-air treatment, and don't worry.' That isn't irony, either. We've got fifteen people in the anteroom, and lunch at one o'clock.

"Out at the hospital, last year, we used to treat sick babies in the wards. It cost about twenty dollars each time, I guess. And we had the same kids back month after month—because we didn't make any inquiries at all into the child's surroundings, the air it breathed or the way its mother fed it. Telling Polish women about modified milk and baths and fresh air! And the poor devils working in sweat-shops and living four in a room! No vision at all, you see—no knowledge of the background.

"That's what Miss Haynes and the settlement has. Just that knowledge. One ward treatment, and a little knowledge of the patient's background, instead of five treatments and no knowledge. I would

simply be opening a branch dispensary beside the settlement house—sort of joining forces. A new kind of job—social doctor. Do you see?”

Breck's eyebrows drew even closer.

“Oh, I see all right,” he said. “But—” He ran his hand through his curly hair. “But it's so—well, it's like all your schemes were in college—so damned unromantic! Why on earth do you want to do it? For heaven's sake, pick a little color! Paris, Fifth Avenue, Johns Hopkins! Art, literature, or science! For the love of Mike, let some mucker with a pug-dog face give pills to Kerrigan Street!”

“And so on, *ad infinitum*, I suppose,” David retorted. “While you and I go on to newer and finer Congress Avenues, and still more superficial achievements!”

DAVID pondered the thing while he thumped the chests and recorded the symptoms of his patients, while he attended the consultations and clinics out at the City Hospital, while he drove swiftly home through the twilight streets to the old barn on Fitzhugh Street, his eyes on the traffic lest he look up suddenly and see a pair of golden-gray eyes. Yes; a good thing, in the opinion of old Dr. Lodge of the City staff; a fine addition, in the opinion of blue-eyed Vera Vassilof, the self-contained, deep-bosomed visitor of the settlement house; a necessary step in the view of little Miss Haynes, with the wrinkles of humor round her eyes and twenty years of calculated unselfishness behind her. Why did he not do it? Early in May he decided to go to Kerrigan Street.

He told his two aunts of his decision round the coal fire after supper. A queer, haunting fear that it might make them unhappy caused him to postpone telling them to the last minute. It was an obligation that only death could terminate, his obligation to these two fading ladies who had been mother and father to him all through his childhood, and who only waited now for old age to come to them in the house of steep stairs and high ceilings. Still, he pointed out to them, it was not as if he were moving away to some distant city. He would be able to see them every day, to be with them for many meals and the all-important Sunday dinner. They both objected, of course, advanced every argument against

the move that they could command, but without avail. David was adamant.

“But you won't give up your grandfather's office, will you?” Aunt Susan inquired.

“I think so, in time,” David replied bravely. Only a matter of time, indeed, before he would have to give it up completely. It would do no good to pretend. “I couldn't do both, you see,” he added.

“I suppose not,” Aunt Susan replied, a curious rebellion against the relentless forces of existence in her mild bosom for an instant. “I suppose it is best,” she said.

This was the end of something for the Carpenters, somehow, she knew. The end of driving associations, perhaps, and ladies' charitable associations, and St. Luke's; yes, and this house on Fitzhugh Street. Only the faded carpets and the padded stairs and the crayon portraits would really be left.

Did David quite realize that?

This was not just a job, a position that he was taking. Going down on Kerrigan Street would mean standing for Kerrigan Street in the end. It always did; just as it had when Aunt Eleanor went to Richmond in 1860, and David's grandfather read her last letter about Abraham Lincoln round the stove in this same front parlor.

People only believe what it was to their own interest to believe, no matter how unconscious they were of it—and called it “tradition.” That was why changing people's ideas always meant struggle and tragedy, bitterness and heart-break. Kerrigan Street would mean that in the end. Because Kerrigan Street was not Congress Avenue—and the thirty blocks between separated them forever.

Did David realize that?

I doubt if he realized much of anything just then, except a curious loneliness at leaving Fitzhugh Street. He packed the books in his third-floor room, trying hard to disregard the emotion that caught at his throat. Why, this room held all he had known of childhood and youth, he felt of a sudden. Could any Brotherhood House ever make up for that? Any aristocracy of achievement?

Nancy heard the news next morning.

“I see by the paper,” Aunt Minnie informed her at breakfast, “that your Dr. Carpenter has joined the staff of the Brotherhood House to run the new children's dispensary.”

"Oh, has he?" she rejoined.

Minnie stirred her coffee a moment, and then read aloud the rest of the item.

"This is merely one of the first steps to be taken in greatly enlarging the Brotherhood House so as to meet the new conditions in Clewesbury. Efficient coordination of the city's charities with private institutions like the Brotherhood House will go a long way to insure a full dollar's return for every dollar expended in such work. The taking over by the Federated Charities of the direction of all such work is one of the main reasons back of the campaign for funds for the Charity Chest which begins next week, when the teams meet for luncheon at Mrs. Jonathan Edmunds' house on Congress Avenue."

She closed the paper slowly, seeking the front page.

"He's one of these amateur reformers, I suppose," she said.

But Nancy apparently did not hear her. She was thinking. So—he was trying to forget her! He was really going to give her up, put her out of his life forever. That was why he had joined this settlement dispensary. That was why she had not met him anywhere lately!

"Aren't you interested in this Charity Chest campaign, father?" she asked.

"Some," that close-mouthed gentleman retorted.

"Are you going to be on the Executive Committee?" she asked.

"I've put Stone on that," he said briefly.

"But I don't know him," she complained.

"Mrs. Edmunds is going to run your end of the show," he answered impatiently. "Why don't you see her, if you're interested?"

"I will," replied Nancy promptly. "Because I am."

Campaigns such as this meant teams, and committees and visits and things. Why wasn't it reasonable, too, that they might mean meeting David? If she worked it correctly, she might even get down to the Brotherhood House, and see him there——

An hour later she was asking Kitty Sassoon a half-dozen questions, and that doll-like young lady was inviting her to go with her to the Edmunds'.

It was really a great lark, Kitty told her, as they drove down to the Edmunds' old-fashioned house in the late afternoon—just a great lark, the whole thing! You met all sorts of people. And they couldn't turn you down when they knew who you were. They ran a big dial, too,

down at the Chamber of Commerce, and you went there for dinner every night and your team reported and everybody cheered the amount.

THIS information did not help Nancy particularly. There would be no team to go soliciting in Kerrigan Street, of course. There must be some committee that would go to the Brotherhood House to talk things over down there, one that—oh, one that would see David. There must be some such committee. She listened for it through all the rustlings and confusion of the meeting, but without the slightest success—not a word about the committee for which she was seeking.

"But I should think," she told Dr. Musson, "that lots of people ought to be told about these places. Isn't there any committee charged with getting out information about the Brotherhood House for instance?"

"We're leaving that to your father, my dear," Dr. Musson assured her warmly. "He and Forrester Stone. Ask your father."

Well, she would never have a better chance than this very afternoon, she decided as she made her way out and went round by Woodlawn Avenue to avoid the traffic-crush at the square. Although it was humiliating, of course, to have to do it. She smiled a little ruefully at herself as she went into the Van Wyck Building and surveyed her brown-clad figure in the elevator mirror. How David could——

"Tenth floor!"

"Oh!" she said, with a tiny catch of the breath. And she got out hastily.

"I want Mr. Van Wyck," she requested of the girl who asked for her name through a grating. "I am his daughter."

"This way," the girl invited her, with a smile.

And she followed through a succession of doors until the Turkish rugs and daffodils and freesias set in pottery bowls told her she was in the sanctum sanctorum.

For an instant she did not realize that her father was not alone, and then she saw that his back was turned because he was talking to some one over by the broad windows. It was her first glimpse of Forrester Stone, and she never forgot it. Just a fleeting impression it was, of dark hair and piercing eyes beneath thick brows which gave his

face an oddly distinguished air; but she realized almost at once that she did not like him. He had a cock-sure air, a frightfully self-confident look—tinged with intense personality. And his big nose made him appear homely, even without the dark-bone glasses.

"It's simply a case of capitalizing your liberal sentiment," he was saying, as he stared down at the busy square. "Steering it straight down safe channels. This business of publicity, you know, cuts both ways in a democracy. You might much better line up than wait until there isn't an employer in Clewesbury who dares call his soul his own—and then have to knuckle under yourself."

That was all Nancy could stand.

"Going to be busy long, dad?" she asked.

Her father turned strangely speculative eyes on her as he swung round in his chair.

"Why, what do you want, Nancy?" he asked absently.

"I've decided to help in the drive," she said. "And I want to be put on a committee."

"Just like that, eh?"

"Yes." She came round to his desk, where her neat Oxfords and brown-silken ankles would not be wasted. "Can't you do it?"

"Maybe," he retorted, as he introduced her casually to Forrester Stone. "There are seventeen committees, you know. What makes you think you want to help now?"

"Why, I feel I ought to," she said. "I could be of some value, I know. Don't you think so, Mr. Stone?"

"Unquestionably," that diplomatic gentleman returned.

He did not seem particularly interested, though, Nancy observed. He seemed to be doing a great deal of looking out of the window.

"Possibly Stone could take you on his committee," Mr. Van Wyck suggested ironically.

"I'd love it!" she exclaimed.

She'd love to run it, too, she thought, if he did not show more interest.

"Why, I'd be delighted," Stone said slowly, as he took out his watch and looked at it. "We're meeting at the Brotherhood House this afternoon at four. We're going to need all kinds of assistance, once we get

started supplying information. I'll take you there in my car."

SHE could hardly have hoped for such luck, she told herself, as they crossed the railroad bridge by Pollock's bar a few minutes later and the rough cobbles of Western Avenue supplanted the block pavement of State Street. Why, this was perfectly ideal!

"You're a New Yorker, aren't you?" she asked of the impassive man beside her.

"Of the usual sort," he responded. "Born in Vermont."

"What business are you in?"

He looked at her in abrupt amusement.

"Adviser on public relations is what it's called," he responded.

Whatever that might mean!

"Oh, I see," she said. "How interesting!"

"Have you ever been in New York?"

"Oh, yes," she told him. "I went to boarding-school just up the Hudson—Tarrytown."

"Then you know all about it," he said, without a smile.

"Oh, they only let us go in chaperoned."

"Necessary in New York," he responded.

"I like Chicago better," she announced.

"The men aren't so self-confident and self-satisfied. They're—nicer."

"That's a new view of Chicago," he remarked.

"New York makes you want to be a vampire."

"And you don't like that, I judge."

She glanced at him sideways to see if he were fooling. But he appeared perfectly serious. He was too self-important to fool about anything, most likely.

"Not any more," she agreed.

Not since she had met David, anyway, she admitted to herself. She didn't feel a bit like one this afternoon, for instance—and this man really needed taking down. All she needed to do was to get him to button her glove, or put her hand on his arm, or try the enthusiastic young-thing attitude on him, and he would fall, of course. She wasn't afraid of him just because he was a man and not a boy like Doug or Tuffy. He wasn't much older than David probably. And David liked her. As they neared the Brotherhood House, she sat bolt upright with excitement. This was where David was!

"It's going to be too interesting for

words," she told the man beside her. "Don't feel you have to bother looking out for me. You do what you have to—and I'll take care of myself."

SHE went with him up the steps and through the decorated hallway to the new gymnasium. And then she lost him neatly as a lady passed and touched his sleeve and took him off to inspect the first-aid room.

She looked round for David at once. He was standing by the small stage at the end of the room, she saw in a minute, his arms folded, talking to an old lady. And there were shadows under his eyes. She felt for a brief moment an odd mixture of satisfaction and compassion at those plain, dark little circles, and then the generosity that was always in her came to the surface in a curious wave, stirring the blood in her cheeks to a soft rose color. It took her merely an instant to reach him.

"Why, hello, David!" she said, disregarding the little old lady. Her hands even trembled a little with the effort she had made to keep from touching him somewhere, somehow—he was so near.

"Hello, Nancy!" he said, extending his hand. "How do you happen to be down here?"

She held his hand just the fraction of a second longer than is usual.

"I wanted to see the place," she said.

The old lady had vanished now, she noticed, following with unwilling steps the vigorous arm of a large, energetic woman with an umbrella.

"Well, do you like it?" he asked, with the shost of his old smile.

"Very much—what I've seen," she said. Though she could like it a great deal better, of course, if she had a nicer welcome. Why, he hadn't even unfolded his arms—just extended his hand, and then withdrawn it and made the usual remarks. Instead of—For an instant she almost turned away, overwhelmed by a swift desire to hurt him, to make him sorry he had lost her, to make the breach an impassable gulf. And then pride came to her assistance and she constructed instantly a platform of impersonal interest.

"Isn't it an interesting place?" she went on. "Mr. Stone brought me down—I'm on his committee. He's a dear! And now he's

gone and left me before I'd seen half of it. Couldn't you spare me a minute?"

"What would you like to see?" he inquired. He was looking at her with great steadiness.

"Why, all of it!" she cried. And then she bethought herself. "And your work last."

David smiled a little at that.

"Why, I'd be glad to," he said evenly.

It was not until they had seen all of the main buildings that his nerve showed signs of giving way. He looked down at her dark-gray eyes then, quite uncertainly.

"I suppose you would like to call this a day, wouldn't you?" he inquired politely.

"Not at all!" she retorted. "Why, I haven't seen your offices or rooms or anything that you are going to do."

He bit his lips.

"Has it occurred to you, Nan—" he began. But she headed him off at once.

"Oh!" she cried. "See the cute stairs! Where do they go?"

He followed her, an indescribable mixture of emotions in him at this new sight of her—fear and tenderness and a desperate kind of unhappiness. Why, her charm was as potent as if he had only left her last night in the garden on Morpeth Terrace, with the hollyhocks standing like ghosts at the foot of the velvet sward. And she seemed as intangible, as completely beyond his control as ever.

He thrust the picture from him angrily.

Why, he breathed at her beck and call. His will was of wax, melting at the flame of her desire. Just of sufficient strength to enable him to keep away from her, so long as she made no move to call him. He might be able to fly from her, but he would never be able to associate with her.

He turned abruptly from the survey of the "cute stairs" at the thought and led the way through the passage to the Brotherhood House study, a rather desperate resolve in his mind—a decision to stick it out this once, anyhow, and frankly to take to his heels.

"It isn't very comfortable, is it?" she was asking him doubtfully now.

"Perhaps not like the homes of our visitors," he was answering, with a slight touch of irony.

He opened the door that led to the stairs.

"We don't entertain Congress Avenue every day, you know," he added.

She hated him for that.

"Please don't get that—that—funny air."

"No more humor," he promised. It did seem to give him a perverse pleasure, indeed, to be just slightly unpleasant—as if, after all, he were really independent and could say what—by Godfrey, what he liked!

"This is my apartment," he announced.

She stood in the doorway and took it in, detail after detail—the six old Colonial windows; the brick fireplace, with the iron-panned wood-fire device, speaking of New England; the plain board floor and the rough plaster walls; the cane-seated, green-painted straight-back chairs, except for the grandfather rocker; the huge desk and the blue-and-white chintz divan in the corner; the plain old-fashioned table with the medical books and tobacco on it; the white cheese-cloth curtains. She sat down on one of the straight-backed chairs, quizzical curiosity writ large on her face.

"Why on earth did you do it, Dave?" she asked.

"Well, it had to be plain, you know," he said, "and our idea is Americanization——"

"Oh, Dave!" she protested.

She got up and went over to the window.

"I mean coming down here." It was her way of introducing the subject, of course. "Why did you do that?"

"Oh, mainly because Miss Haynes asked me, I imagine," he replied unsuspectingly. "Though, there's a certain charm——" He meant the children, of course; but he stopped short for fear of saying it.

"Oh," she said, "I see. Do you like it?"

"What I've seen of it, yes."

"Do you think you'll stay?" she inquired.

"If they'll have me," he replied. He hesitated. "There is a curious satisfaction in it—quite intangible, but very real to me. Aunt Hat thinks I'm crazy, of course." It was odd, the way he fell into intimacy almost at once. "I can't quite see ending up another Beau Stoddard, with lilies in the window and an invitation to the latest débutante's ball on the table."

"But wasn't it a rather sudden idea?" she ventured.

"Oh, yes," he admitted.

She stared at him, a tiny hint of unhappiness in her eyes. She could stand the sweetness of her heart no longer.

"Dave," she asked, "don't you like me any more?"

He stirred uncomfortably in the sudden silence.

"Isn't that a closed subject, Nan?" he asked. He did not dare look at her.

She was buttoning and unbuttoning her gloves quite meticulously.

"Is it?"

He took his courage in his hands.

"Yes," he said firmly.

She rose without the least warning, stood quite still for an instant while his heart stopped beating and he set his jaw—and then she went to the window, brushing her veil against her eyes with a curious motion.

"All right, David," she said. The hesitation was barely perceptible. "Let's go back."

His heart smote him violently.

"No," he said.

"Yes!" she said passionately.

"Nan——" he began.

"I'm going!" she cried. "I don't see why they put love in the world——"

SHE almost ran down the narrow, steep little stairs then, running blindly into the closed door at the bottom like some kitten pursued by a terrible phantom, opening it swiftly, the thought of escape overshadowing all concern over the astonishment of any one who might see her—the old Irishman who stood with the broom by the hearth in the study, the two women who stood with young Dr. Dunstan, the little groups in the passage and the gymnasium, or anybody else.

Why had they put love in the world, if this was what it did to you?

It was not until she was back at Morpeth Terrace, however, an hour later, that she gave way to her feelings and the tears came in a tiny flood—a kind of despair in her, indeed, by that time, as she lay on the bed and the wheel of emotion dipped into pride and bitterness, loneliness and longing, and into love again. Why, the thing must be just one more part of their quarrel, of their relations! It couldn't be that David really wanted to end everything.

She lay on the bed in her own room after dinner, watching the dusk gradually fade and the street-lamp outside shine in white splotches on the wall, in her heart an almost unbearable loneliness and no picture except that of David.

Yes; he was probably just rising from the

table in the Brotherhood House now and going up those narrow stairs to his rooms. Or perhaps he was going out. That was more likely. There was some meeting at Mrs. Edmunds'. Dr. Musson had said there was. How *could* he go—if he felt at all as she did?

Perhaps, however, he didn't. There was gaiety in the Brotherhood House—that blue-eyed Vera Vassilof and Henry Dunstan! There were so many people in his life. Not at all like her's.

It was just ten o'clock when she rose. She switched on the little lamp at the head of her bed, standing a moment staring at its soft rose light. Then she went softly to her closet and picked out her Peter Thompson, undoing her velvet dinner dress as she went.

It fell in a little heap on the closet floor. But she paid no attention to its fate. She had the blue blouse half-way on, indeed, as she tiptoed across the room and fixed her hair a moment before the glass.

A few minutes, and she stood at the door, listening intently into the dimly lit upper hall, staring down the grandeur of the big square stairs, aware of no sound except that of Aunt Minnie playing Canfield in the back room, occasionally cheating when defeat seemed imminent.

She stole down the stairs then, closing the big front door behind her softly, and hurried across the terrace and down the long stretch to the car-line, her slippers tapping under foot the summer sidewalks dark with rain as she ran to catch the car. She got on, oddly triumphant.

Curious how few people went down-town at ten at night, she thought, as she sat quite huddled in her coat on one of the side seats of the deserted car, her eyes fixed on the changing lights and shadows of Garfield Avenue outside.

She changed cars for Woodlawn at the square, quite unconscious of the efforts of the flashily dressed young man by the trolley-pole to attract her attention, only dimly aware of the crowd of women with babies and packages, of negroes standing on the rear platforms, of the crowd of rough men forward in the car making obscure remarks.

She tapped her fingers on the window-pane to keep her thoughts off David and stop the odd beating of her heart.

Kerrigan Street was next, she noticed. And she got off hastily.

She was actually here at last. Was David home?

The night-light shone dimly in the little office in the brick house, and she went up the walk and opened the door swiftly, noiselessly. But the room was empty. Sudden color came to her cheeks as she stood an instant on the faded rug.

Well, she would wait for him in the room up-stairs, in the big grandfather rocker. No one would come there, and when he came he would be alone. She mounted the narrow stairs, holding up her skirts, breathless with excitement, and opened the high door at the top—and got one of the pleasantest surprises of her existence!

He was standing by the desk, alone—and he turned almost instantly and saw her.

"Nan!" he said.

She did not take a single chance.

"I've come to tell you I love you," she said.

And, oh, what a desperate hurry she seemed to be in to say it!

"Nan!" he repeated.

And he took her in his arms.

It was not until almost an hour later that he bethought himself to ask her if she was going to marry him.

"Why, of course," she said then, smiling. "Wasn't that what we fought about?"

And two tiny tears came to her eyes.

"But why the tears?" he asked gaily.

"Because I want you to remember always, that I loved you to-night," she whispered.

THAT was the perfect hour. Across the world, at Charing Cross, love said good-by forever, for it was the August of Nineteen fourteen. At the Gare du Nord, happiness strained its eyes after the departing beloved. Even in the Wilhelmstrasse Bahnhof, tears and sad premonition caught at the throat of pride. But in Clewesbury David and Nancy only waited each evening until a result had been posted in a big marble hall, and then they sought the quiet garden on Morpeth Terrace, where love could hold sway uninterrupted.

That was all the war meant to them then. No war-emotion in Clewesbury—only the next thing to it, civic pride. Was not Clewesbury the sixth city? Why, then, should she not have the sixth biggest

federated charities? Pride of bigness threw its mantle over even Clewesbury's slums at the thought.

And the charity campaign was a huge success. As Andrew Van Wyck stated in the Clewesbury Club, they had three million now, and they could put out their hands and find these charities whenever they wanted to. That seemed to relieve him immensely.

It was just a week later that David told his aunts about his engagement, at one of those Sunday dinners which had marked the gatherings of the Carpenter family from time immemorial.

"I'm not surprised," Aunt Hat remarked in her teacup. Had she not prophesied this very thing to Susan, ever since the evening they saw David with the girl at Edmunds'? All these goings-on these last few months most likely had been part of her deviltry. The girl had set her cap for David from the beginning, and secured him, too—despite the fact that it would be impossible to pick out a more unlikely person to go live with him on Kerrigan Street. They wanted sensible, practical women in the Brotherhood House—as sensible, at least, as women with such ridiculously advanced ideas could be. Not coquettes. And that was all you could call this girl.

"But she's wonderful, Aunt Hat, really," David told her. "You will be crazy about her when you know her."

"No doubt," Hat retorted. "Her father, too, I suppose." What would David's grandfather have thought of such a marriage? Or Mr. Van Wyck leading the Chamber of Commerce? Time was working odd changes in Clewesbury since Peter had been elected president of the Congress Avenue Driving Club and had climbed stiffly out of his cutter on his snow-swept steps outside and gone up to his blue-carpeted room to die.

"When are you going to be married?" Susan asked.

"In December," David replied, before humor forced a slight qualification. "Though I suppose it depends somewhat on Mr. Van Wyck."

The cynicism that underlay every thought of Miss Harriet Carpenter's came to the surface then as she rose from the dessert.

"And not at all on Susan and me, I see," she said abruptly. The Carpenters always made fools of themselves when they mar-

ried, she decided, as she climbed the stairs that evening.

THERE was no apprehension in David, however, that he was doing anything foolish. It would be heaven itself to own Nancy completely! Nothing else could compare to that. She was different, of course—she was not like his aunts, for instance, or Élise Edmunds or Janet Addams; but she was charmingly different, vividly different—that was all. She was enthralling, once you knew her—adorable!

Afterward, those three months always appeared to David like some splendid bit of pageantry which Clewesbury had arranged as a background for happiness. Only the failure of Nancy to tell her father worried him at first. She could not avoid that forever, he knew, and he began to feel uncomfortable of nights now, when he encountered the old man for an instant sometimes as he came or left the house on Morpeth Terrace. Why did she not take her courage in her hands and take the plunge?

He never knew how Nancy dreaded the interview.

A double dread was in her mind—her father and herself. Yes; engagement was wonderful, thrilling! But it seemed so final, somehow, to tell her father. She would never be able to withdraw after she had told him, even if she felt she wanted to. He would make her go through with it. It was like giving up all idea of merely trying love and engagement to tell him she had decided to marry. And then, too, he would be so sarcastic even without any such considerations on her part. He would be so unpleasant!

Those were the thoughts that were holding her back. They were the reasons, too, why she delayed the whole thing too long in the end, unaware of the tide of anger which was rising in Andrew Van Wyck as he sat in the library at night listening to the voices—and the lack of them—on the pergola outside, or came home about one o'clock from the club and saw by the open French windows that his daughter was still up.

It was a sort of dull rage that was taking possession of him during those evenings—a rage that came because of his clear realization that she was getting more outrageous instead of less. She was staying up all night

now with this Dr. Carpenter out in the garden, after playing him for six months and getting sick of him and then roping him in again. It was toward the beginning of the third week that he decided to act. One evening he waited grimly for David to go home and then followed Nan heavily up the stairs toward the blue bedroom, still holding a copy of the *Pottery Magazine* in his hand.

"Nan," he said deliberately, "this has got to stop."

She turned swiftly.

"What has?" she asked.

He clenched the magazine a little tighter. This was always her game—misunderstanding.

"This flirtation stuff!" he said angrily. "There's only one name for the sort of woman you'll be if you go on!" He took his cigar out of his mouth. "Don't you suppose I know what you're doing? Don't you suppose I've ever seen a woman make a fool of herself? What in God's name are you thinking of to go on like this?"

Her hands dropped, and she sat down at the dressing-table, her eyes on her knees.

"Suppose I don't intend to 'go on'?" she asked.

"You never intend to," he told her. "This thing with Carpenter was going to be different—wasn't it? And how different is it?"

"It isn't the same," she said in a low tone.

"It's got the same look to me!"

"But it's different," she repeated softly.

He stared at her for a moment and then sat down.

"Well, what's the difference?" he inquired. There was no use taking up anything with her unless you took it up thoroughly. It took an hour to get anywhere—with her mind!

"Why, the difference is," she said, "that I'm going to marry David."

It took Mr. Van Wyck almost a minute to digest that. And then he indulged in a satirical chuckle.

"Do you expect me to believe that?" he asked. This was a brand-new dodge.

"It's true," she told him. "I'm going to marry him in December."

Going to marry! That fact struck through Mr. Van Wyck's cynicism like a dagger. Why, marriage wasn't flirtation. She could not mean marriage. But if she did? Perhaps there wasn't any dodge about the

thing in the least. Perhaps—he gripped himself tightly where he sat on the chair and refused to be stampeded.

"Going to marry him before you get sick of him, eh?" he inquired sarcastically.

"Perhaps," Nancy replied. A tiny spot of color crept back in each cheek with her admission, as if to warn her to say no more. Explanations in this house only meant endless argument, endless harangues. It was best to keep things to oneself.

"Are you serious?" Andrew Van Wyck inquired.

"Quite," she answered, as she turned to her mirror and began doing her hair.

She had combed it and begun her braid before her father spoke again.

"Well, I'll be damned!" he said.

She turned on him quite hotly.

"I don't see why you say that!" she cried.

"Because I don't think you know what you're doing," he told her angrily. "Because I think you're getting into one more mess. Because I think you're following your own sweet will—and ignoring the consequences. Isn't that enough?"

Why, she wouldn't last with this fellow!

THREE weeks ago in the office she must have been engaged to him, and yet she'd played every one of her infernal flirtatious tricks on Forrester Stone! That showed what the thing would amount to even under good circumstances. And this fellow lived on Kerrigan Street!

"I suppose you're going to live on Kerrigan Street," he added angrily.

"I guess so," she admitted.

The curious mixture of affection and irritation that she always called forth rolled mountain-high in Andrew Van Wyck.

"Well, I won't let you," he said harshly. "You'll listen to me before you throw away your life. You're piling up real trouble for yourself this time. You're not made for this God-Almighty uplifting stuff. You won't stand it six months. It's mighty different living on Kerrigan Street from just going down there with Forrester and coming back to this bathroom at night. By God, I know! I've spent my life getting out of places like Kerrigan Street. It's no place for a woman like you. If you've got to marry, don't marry there." He stared at her with a kind of fury. "Do you see?"

He bit his cigar again as she did not

answer, sudden conviction in him that she wouldn't see. No; water and sand! That was she. You could talk until hell froze over—and it had no effect on her intentions, once her desires were roused. She just used talk to obscure facts. How she must put it over this Carpenter!

"Don't Carpenter see that?" he inquired abruptly.

"David loves me," she said.

"For yourself alone, eh?"

"Yes."

In the silence, Andrew Van Wyck doubted it.

"Does he know that that is all he'll get out of it?" he inquired grimly.

For the first time Nancy smiled.

"He isn't marrying me for money," she said. Her smile became a tiny laugh at that. The picture of impractical David marrying any one for money was grotesque. It had the humor of burlesque in it.

"Because he won't get it, if he is," Mr. Van Wyck stated.

"Meaning you won't give me anything?" she asked him directly.

"Not even the cost of a wedding," he replied.

"Just why?"

"So he can appreciate just you alone," he said grimly.

And he rolled up the *Pottery Magazine* quite tightly and went slowly out of the room and down the hall.

If the fellow was taking advantage of her emotions to marry her in hopes of getting the Van Wyck money, why, he had another guess coming, he told himself as he closed the door of his own room. All these fellows came to money in the end, particularly as they got older. And this man was over thirty. She would never see anything straight herself. Her vanity obscured everything else. She thought she was irresistible. But this would bring the thing out in the open.

WELL, it accomplished that, too. It brought David to the Van Wyck Building the next afternoon, in his mind an impression that he had been letting Nancy carry the burden of their engagement somehow—and that she had mismanaged it.

It was a cool enough interview that followed. He was biting off more than he could chew, Van Wyck told David—and he did not consider his daughter old enough to marry or of the temperament that should marry without being more positive than she was about this affair. The man she married should be able to hold her for a year without seeing her at all. He might be disposed to call that love. Otherwise, love was only the name fools gave to desire. Nancy could never live on Kerrigan Street, anyway, and he didn't purpose supporting the man she married in idleness. So that disposed of that.

The best thing for any man to do was to forget Nancy—unless he wanted to live in hell for the next twenty years.

If David knew all these things and considered them, and still wanted to marry Nancy, why, he could only say that he couldn't stop him, and that he wouldn't interfere. Each man's life was his own. Each woman's, too. David could shoulder the responsibility he had carried for some twenty years—if he insisted. But as for himself, he washed his hands of the whole thing.

And he would never advance one cent.

"The old man is all right, though," David told Nancy that night. "He's only worried, I think, because he doesn't know how you are going to stand living on Kerrigan Street. And he's really fond of you, 'way inside."

"Maybe," Nancy said inscrutably.

"Do you think you will like it?" he asked.

"Oh, Dave!" she remonstrated. "What difference does that make to us?"

It didn't make any difference where you lived, indeed—that wasn't the doubtful question in marriage. The real question was: How did you feel about "forever and ever"? Wasn't that the real question?

"Did he tell you he wouldn't give me any money?" she asked.

"Oh, yes," David answered.

"What did you say?"

"I?" he exclaimed. "Why, I guess I didn't say anything—as I remember."

"You're a dear!" she told him impulsively.

And she kissed him swiftly, rather to his astonishment.

Are these strangely matched persons laying for themselves the foundation of a life of happiness or of misery? The developments in the next instalment of this great human story are of intense interest:

See July EVERYBODY'S—out June 15th.

The Spirit *of the* Man

*Have You Ever Wondered How Animals Look
Upon Us, What They Think of Us, or What
They Would Think if They Had that Power?
It is a Fascinating Question That this Fascinating
Story Raises*

By Alan Sullivan

Author of "The Spirit of the Beast"

Illustration by Ernest Fuhr

THE jungle's edge rose like a solid green wall within a hundred feet of the white men's camp. On the other side was a strip of yellow sand, and beyond that a black, unwrinkled river, gliding mysteriously from the unknown. Three men sat on camp-stools round a small table that was set close to the strip of sand. At a little distance a group of blacks squatted near a fire, from which a thin pencil of smoke climbed into the motionless air. There was talk in the low, even accents that the wilderness imposes on those who brave her solitudes, then a lighting of pipes—and silence. Presently the three disappeared into the brown pyramid of a weather-beaten tent; the blacks vanished to their own shelter a little farther down-stream.

The camp was deep in sleep when something stirred at the edge of the jungle colonnade. The tangle of lianas parted and, framed in vines, the flat face of a great ape was turned toward the river. He stood, monstrous, hairy and half human, his black lips lifted, his pointed ears twitching—a master of the jungle surveying the environment of man with a savage and poignant fascination. With nostril and ear he tested the silence for sign of danger, then moved noiselessly forward.

A hundred yards away a black porter sighed in his sleep, and the beast became instantly rigid. Presently he raised himself to full height, rolling a round head on his massive shoulders, so that his trunk thrust up from the tangle of grass and vine like that of some hideous god, till, dropping on all fours and crouching close to the ground, he crept stealthily on. A moment later he put out a horny hand, made a deep, soft rumble in his muscle-bound throat and felt timidly at the corner of the camp-table. Strange odors assailed his nostrils, and every nerve was tensely ready for escape.

Soon the fear in the black eyes became assuaged, and he slid his blunted fingers along the smooth surface toward a metal cup. He did not know what the cup was for, but that evening had watched the men putting it to their faces time after time. Then his teeth fastened in it, and as the edge pressed hard against his nose, he became horribly frightened and threw the thing away. Next he essayed a fork that a lazy cook had left unwashed, and the faint taste of strange food gave him a queer thrill, just as if the taste were not entirely new. After that he stayed quite still for a time till he began to hunt nervously about for the cup, and, finding it, laid it back on the table with a little chuckle of pleasure.

Finally he leaned his great arms on the boards and stared wistfully at the tent.

There was neither fear nor anger in the terrible features, but only a vast wonder. He had known of the presence of these new animals for days, and something had been calling him ever since they came. He knew, too, that the jungle was afraid of them—as it was of him—and this made him feel as though they were not his natural enemies. He could not trust them yet, for, balanced in the tree-tops, he had seen too much killing. But a far-away voice told him to keep as close as he dared and see as much as he might. And it appeared now that, for animals who were weak and moved so slowly, they were very powerful.

From the tent came the sound of a voice, sleepy but distinct. The great ape stiffened where he stood, ready for instant flight. But in the same instant he heard a whisper commanding him to stay and promising that there was no danger. So he remained, poised tensely, while little quivers ran through his body. The sounds sank into his brain, and presently his wide gray lips began to twist in wordless imitation. He made no noise, but stood there with contorted face till the sound died. It seemed that he ought to be able to do this if he tried. But he was also sure that this was not the time. Presently, creeping close to the tent, he crouched low in the half-light and rested a long time without stirring.

IN THE middle of the next forenoon, the white men struck into the jungle, walking single-file. The trail was crooked, much overgrown and indistinct. A hundred feet above them the great ape swung easily through the branches. He did not know where they were going or why; he knew only that he wanted to go, too. He had been thinking about them in his own way ever since he slipped out of camp in the small of the morning, his brain full of tumult. Finding his mate, he had angered her by making strange sounds with lips and throat, so that he had not slept at all. And he desired, above all things, to keep this new matter secret.

So for hours he watched and brooded. The rest of the tribe swung along, but he chased them away with a fury that drew glances of surprise from the men beneath. As time passed, the great ape became con-

scious of a queer protective impulse that prompted him to search the tree-tops for dangers which might threaten the things below, and which, he was somehow assured, they could not see for themselves. Busy with all this, he forgot, for the first time in his life, to eat, and was downcast when the men began to retrace their steps. He was even a little used to the report of a rifle, having decided that there was no danger unless he could see the strange animals' eyes at the same time. That night, at sundown, his mate received a severe beating, and he took up his observation-point again.

There was little done in camp that evening which escaped notice, and when it had gone to sleep, he began a close and painstaking survey.

First to the fire. There was no red flower now. When he looked for it, he hurt his fingers. Then to the table, where he found more things than before. Lifting the cup, he did not bite, and a little water trickled down his gullet. The hairless brows were raised in surprise. He tried the fork again, and pushing it too far in, pricked his throat. He puzzled over this, and did it the second time—without it hurting him. From that he went on, learning not to grasp things too strongly, because it seemed to hurt them. Finally he sat in a camp-chair, which immediately collapsed. He leaped from the ruin straight into the air with the poignant knowledge that he had done something wrong. Then, as though to conceal the crime, he stuffed the fragments under a bush.

And all this time he was getting happier. The camp was very quiet. He wanted to crawl near the strange animals and lie down beside them. And just then he heard the faintest possible splash in the black water. A crocodile had lifted himself, shining, from the river, and waddled slowly across the strip of sand.

The ape bristled where he stood, for to all simians the crocodile is a thing of fear. There is no escape once those long jaws have closed, and it is vain to batter at that bony skull. The manlike beast knew this, and his first impulse was to fly, but there rose within him a grim fury that this monster should threaten those whom he now, suddenly and in a queer way, recognized as friends. His hairy throat began to swell; muscles bulged on neck and arms as he



Grabbing the handle, he waged war, giving vent to hoarse, choking grunts of fury. The crocodile
rocked in anger.

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crouched. The crocodile glanced at him malevolently with a narrow, vicious eye, then, taking no further heed, waddled nearer the tent. The tent interested him exceedingly.

The scaly twenty-foot length had covered half the distance when the ape made a little dancing motion. Simultaneously his right paw touched something round and smooth and hard. It was the handle of a shovel. The callous fingers closed on it, and for the first time in his life the big brute knew that he was armed. It had no weight, but the ape felt that with this he could strike and stand farther off than ever before. The crocodile halted for an instant, having perceived something new, then lurched silently forward. He had smelled that which was within the tent.

There was only a few yards left when the ape hurled himself into the air. He landed just outside the hissing swing of the crocodile's deadly tail, and, lifting the shovel, brought it down with terrific force on the broad, sheathed neck. A clatter of metal on bone, and the thing split in his grip. Grabbing the handle, he waged war, giving vent to hoarse, choking grunts of fury. The crocodile rocked in anger. He was not wont to be balked of his desire. The great jaws clashed, and half his length skidded to right or left as the big hairy body danced, barking, beside him. Then from the tent came a shout, and three men tumbled into the moonlight.

The ape recognized something in the hands of the first, and heard more shouts from the blacks, who came racing up, but for the very first time he was too lost in anger to know fear. The passion of protection had transformed him into a demon. Came a flash and a sharp report. His side felt suddenly sore, and where the crocodile's eye had been was now a gaping hole. At that he knew instinctively that there was no further need for help—and these new kinsmen had hurt him. Swaying in sheer wonder, he waited till, at a shout that saved his life, though he could not know it, he flung himself into the jungle.

A GUARD was posted at the water's edge, and the camp drifted back to slumber after a hot argument as to what the fight had been really about. But no man came near the truth. Half a mile away the great

ape flouted the consolation of his mate and nursed a bloody tear in his side. He was horribly chagrined. He could not reason the thing out, for no reason was in him, but was divided between resentment and a strong desire to be alone. His memory was applicable to places, food and other apes, but not to any previous emotions; so he could not go back over what he had done and see where the fault lay. The point was that he had made a mistake. He sat for a long time, then, toward morning, worked his way deliberately in the direction of the clearing. Swinging across the tree-tops, his mind cleared; for this seemed the solution of all things. He was willing, almost, to be hurt again if they would only let him be near them.

So it came that the white men never left camp without their invisible convoy. When they went up the river to shoot crocodiles in the big pool, he paralleled their course on shore, cheerfully silent as he clambered from branch to branch. Silence, he had learned, was the chief requirement.

Once he threw some ripe fruit into the camp, then fled as a man reached for his rifle. The next night he laid fruit on the ground beside the tent, and was rewarded when his masters picked it up with wonderment. And all the time something warned him to keep carefully out of sight.

Then came the greatest day of his life. It was toward evening when one of the men picked up his rifle and sauntered into the jungle, passing close to the ape's hiding-place. The latter followed automatically. It was the first occasion when any one of them had walked thus alone. They moved deliberately, man and beast, while all around the jungle throbbed with teeming life. The ape felt more important than ever before, but experienced a strange sense of apprehension. They were half a mile from camp when the rifle spoke without warning, and the invisible guardian saw that it had not been lifted to the master's shoulder. Simultaneously, the master pitched forward on his face.

The ape hung motionless in space and stared down. This had never happened before, and he knew that something was wrong. The man did not stir, so he dropped to a lower branch, choking with excitement. Still there was silence, and with wild nerves tuned to the highest pitch, he descended

inch by inch till he swayed twenty feet above the ground. Man-smell and blood-smell were in his twitching nostrils.

On his great rounded back the hair rose stiffly as, grasping the rough trunk, he moved imperceptibly earthward. Touching the ground, he had a strange feeling of joy at being alone with the master. He was full of fear and nameless delight.

The man did not stir. A broad black paw went timidly out and rested like a feather on the slack shoulder. The ape quivered at the touch, and fear became suffused in dumb compassion. The smell of man and blood rolled up in thick, invisible waves, burdened with death and danger, but he fought back his savage instinct with all the power of a new and profound conviction. They were kinsmen—this thing and he. Then, prompted by he knew not what, he turned the man over, marveling at his lightness, and laid a horny finger on the hole in the torn shoulder.

After an instant of indecision, the great beast darted a hundred yards away, returning with a few aromatic leaves, which he pushed gently into the wound. It was what he would have done for himself. The bleeding decreased and he was very happy. Then, it seemed, there was something else to be provided, and he flung himself into the jungle, coming back burdened with fruit. This he laid beside the still figure.

Moments passed, and the brute became convinced that something had been forgotten. He puzzled over it, growing more and more excited till, following the law of the wild, he began to call. The voice of him, rough, broken and beseeching, lifted into the tree-tops, and the jungle all round became populous. A myriad bright eyes peered through the leafy screen; a myriad small forms drew closer and closer. The ape knew it, but paid no heed. Ever his voice swelled, the vast lungs emptied and filled, and hairy hands drummed on the great arched breast. The clamor of it rolled through swamp and thicket till, all in a breath, the jungle became silent, for, far away, moved that which was stranger to its gloom.

The ape heard them first and, darting up the nearest tree, watched till his other masters found that which they sought. He

heard their exclamations, and saw faces turned to the green canopy overhead. His sharp eyes missed nothing when they slung the limp figure between two black porters, and one of the white men, with a quick upward glance, stooped and put the fruit in the bulging hammock. And, when the small procession moved riverward, he glided above it—a ghost in the shadows.

A WEEK after that the new animals went away. The ape knew for two days that they were going. Nothing else could explain what he saw. At the same time he had a definite feeling that it was no use to try to follow. He was conscious now of things that made his head hurt, and when he saw one of the new animals—his one—carried into the biggest canoe, great tears rolled down his naked face. Then there was a stir by the water's edge, and after that the jungle silence.

Dropping to the ground, he moved across the clearing and stood upright where once had been the camp. The man-smell still clung to it, and came most strongly from the flat place where the tent had stood. The ape surveyed the litter that was left, picking up things here and there, only to let them slip from listless fingers. Presently he found a battered metal cup, and from a near-by bush pulled out the fragments of a camp-chair. At that he sat down, holding the latter between his feet and the cup in his black paws. Then he put the cup slowly to his lips.

Day waned, but the big brute did not stir. A breath had reached him from without the wilderness; a light had flickered uncertainly in the savage brain. The breath had died away, and the light was nearly extinguished, but somewhere in that formidable skull glowed a surviving spark.

He swayed where he sat, and, beating his breast, flung a wild complaint to the stars. The harsh note penetrated the purple distance till lesser beasts shivered in the dark, and all that walked or climbed or crept took heed to their going. Gradually the cry sharpened till grief merged into wonderment and wonderment mounted to a blind fury. Then, grasping his treasure and drunk with the lust to kill, the gorilla hurled himself into the jungle.

"The Ladder in the Jungle," another of Mr. Sullivan's remarkable stories, will appear in July EVERYBODY'S—out June 15th.

Everybody's Magazine, June, 1922

The Game of P o v e r t y

*A
Novelette
Complete in
This Issue*

*Some People Will Think, No Matter How Securely You
Shackle Their Minds. Being Labeled with Dollars and
Surrounded by Snobs Didn't Paralyze this Girl's Mind.
She Knew There Was Reality—and Found It*

By Philip Gibbs

Illustrations by E. Hopper

I AM sorry now that I didn't travel second-class on the *Aquitania*, where I should have enjoyed the companionship of a very decent crowd of nobodies with more ideas than dollars, instead of taking a first-class berth and mixing up with millionaires, celebrities of the motion pictures, Russian dancers, American bankers, international financiers, commercial travelers in a big way of business, newspaper proprietors, theatrical stars, Foreign Office gentlemen, society beauties, and Janet Brandt, whose desire for the simple life led me into great trouble.

I regretted having bought that first-class berth when I saw Paul Hirst standing below the second-class gangway with an old leather kit-bag dumped beside him and a wad of American magazines under his arm. He was shabbily dressed, as usual, in an old trench coat with the collar tucked up, and a felt hat thrust back from his forehead in a careless way. He stood watching the crowd of passengers seething into the great ship, as once I had seen him staring across a field in Flanders where Death was having a great time, with a look of intense sadness, in spite of a little ironical smile twisting the corners of his thin lips as though in mockery of life. I knew and liked the bitterness that

sometimes gave a biting edge to this boy's spoken thoughts, for it was in revolt against the world's cruelty, and revealed hatred of injustice and sham, sometimes too sharply, as is the way of youth before it gets tolerant by knowledge of self.

They were bitter words he spoke when I clutched hold of his arm and said,

"I'd no notion you were going back in this little tub."

He stared at me for a moment without recognition, because he was in intense contemplation of the crowd about him. Then he gave a nervous, boyish laugh and answered me.

"Dives and his dancing women won't be bothered with Lazarus behind the second-class barrier," he said.

"My dear lad," I told him, "Lazarus won't be parched for a cup of cold water in the second class of this ship. It's the lap of luxury."

"Yes," he said, in self-contradiction; "and I'm sick of luxury! I'd like to be going back steerage. Poverty is clean and real. After six weeks of New York hotels at other people's expense, I'm fed up with marble pillars—mostly sham—with painted hussies dancing to jazz bands, the stench of overrich crowds, and the damned

callousness of those who have the dollars while those who haven't get broken on the wheel of life."

"Is that how America strikes you?" I asked. "It's a rather superficial view—isn't it?—and a bit ungenerous."

His pale face flushed a little, and he gave his nervous laugh.

"Oh, I know! I like the people. They've been enormously kind to me, and on the whole they think straight. The average crowd is clean-hearted and alive. But too many of 'em are too rich, and American luxury is revolting. Especially when half the world is starving."

"You're a Bolshevik," I said, and he grinned at me and replied,

"I'm a cankered soul, but not that."

I asked after his sister Pat—Miss Madcap—who had led me a rare dance one night in Paris, when she was out for any kind of fun like a wood-nymph in a forest glade, though we were in the Palace Pigalle when peace was declared.

"Still safe," said Paul Hirst, laughing at the thought of the girl who kept his rooms untidy and his sense of humor bright. "At least, she hasn't cabled that she has run off with an *apache* or any little escapade like that."

"She'll be glad to get you back," I told him; and I saw by the look in his eyes that his heart had bridged the Atlantic and was back in the Rue de la Pompe, where that sister of his teased him until he pulled her hair and made her squeak, interrupted his work (which was a writer's job) by introducing casual and disreputable friends, made omelets which were wonderful when they did not get burned on the gas-stove, and went on short rations with unbroken gaiety when funds were low, as often happened.

"Not so glad as I'll be to hear her impudence," said Paul.

Those were the last words I could have with him before getting aboard at the warning note of the ship's bell and the shout of: "All visitors ashore!" I waved to him over the first-class gangway, and then saw him from D deck as he went into his part of the ship, where he would be divided from me by impassable barriers of snobbishness and etiquette.

IT WAS then that I saw Janet Brandt and her alarming aunt, alarming, in spite of graciousness, because of the homage which she expected and obtained from all

who knew her supreme position in the social world of America. I noticed how even there, on the *Aquitania* at the hour of starting, when all the first-class passengers were surging from deck to deck in search of cabins, baggage and stewards, with the first excitement of discovery and adventure, a clear passage was made by common consent when Miss Alice Brandt, with her niece, her two maids and the bedroom steward, advanced to her suite on A deck. So I have seen crowds fall back with reverence when Queen Mary has passed among them across the lawns of Buckingham Palace. Behind the party, two deck stewards carried enormous bouquets of hothouse flowers, sent aboard as farewell tributes, and a fat stewardess waddled after them with cardboard boxes obviously filled with similar beauty.

Several elderly gentlemen bowed to Miss Alice Brandt as she passed by them, and one of them, whom I knew by sight as the president of a great commercial house of the Middle West, had the confidence to say in a hearty voice,

"Delighted to see you on this ship, Miss Brandt!"

Only by the slightest nod, which hardly disturbed the long osprey feather of her hat, did Miss Brandt acknowledge this salutation. I had not even that privilege, for when I found myself in the icy light of her gray eyes and bowed in remembrance of a dinner she had been pleased to give "in my honor," as she had very graciously said, she looked through me and beyond me as though I were utterly transparent.

"That will save me future trouble," I thought, knowing the social strain of an Atlantic voyage; but at the same moment Janet Brandt caught sight of me and gave me such a bright smile of recognition, so friendly in greeting, that I revised my opinion and decided to render homage to the aunt in order to enjoy a chat with the niece. Not the first one, for at that dinner-party in Fifth Avenue we had talked about books and plays, and I had been surprised by the intelligence of the girl when she got the better of a painful shyness. She even showed signs of a sense of humor, which might well have been stifled by the overwhelming luxury of her position and surroundings.

"Who are they, I wonder?" said an

unmistakably English voice behind me. "Madam Whoever-she-is looks as though she owned the ship."

"She easily could—that's sure," answered an American. "Miss Alice Brandt holds most of the old man's property in trust for that niece of hers, who will be one of the richest young women in New York one of these days."

"Oh, the Brandts!" said the English voice; and there was a note of respect in it, as at the mention of one of the reigning houses of Europe before crowns were cheap.

The morning promenade up A deck or B was like a walk up Fifth Avenue in the season. It seemed to me that the *Aquitania* was filled with every one I had ever met in London and New York; and it was only by sneaking away to one's stateroom that one could avoid the incessant strain of conversational episodes with all these people who had nothing to do but talk until some of them settled down to endless bridge-parties, talk about German reparations—could they pay and would they pay?—about the collapse of the European markets, about American policy under the new President—could they afford to "stay out," or would they be forced to "come in?"—about the new ambassador to London, the bankruptcy of Poland, the Bolshevik peril from Russia, the spiritual downfall of many peoples demoralized by war. These people talked well, and as I paced the decks hour after hour with big financiers, big business men, big newspaper men, I was enormously impressed by their sincerity, their anxiety, their breadth of view, their desire to help the world out of the awful mess into which it had plunged headlong. I was enormously impressed—and utterly weary of all such talk, because I had been talking it myself since the ending of the war, and there was nothing new to hear or to say about this tragedy of history.

My table companions were a relief for that reason. They chattered splendid foolishness, and we laughed outrageously at small jests, like a pack of babies. Yet they were babies with a knowledge of life's brutalities, tears, and agonies, and this childishness was deliberate and philosophical.

So, at least, it must have been with little Sonia Recochevitz, the Russian dancer, who had escaped from the Bolsheviks after frightful adventures before coming to New

York, and who had had other adventures of an amorous kind, not unmixed with tragedy, if gossip did not lie.

Yet she was wonderfully gay, with a natural playfulness which was communicated even to inanimate objects like her table-napkin, which became, by a touch of her fingers, a white kitten, a lop-eared rabbit, a dancer like herself, with fantastic little steps to the music of the orchestra.

"Her mind has not grown up," I thought for a while, until one or two things she said revealed sad understanding of life. Once she whispered to me as the others were laughing very heartily at some jest of hers:

"We are like the people of Boccaccio's 'Decameron.' Do you remember how, when the plague was raging, they made merry company and put the thought of death away by naughty stories? Our world is plague-stricken—dying—and it's well to laugh, lest we should weep too much."

AT OUR table sat a young Irishman, famous in America as a producer of motion pictures, into which he put a sense of art and a strange reality of emotion. This Dennis O'Calloran played with words and thoughts in the drollest way and was a very good mimic of any personality which amused him, which was not rarely. He seemed without a care and happy in the success that had come to him after years of miserable poverty in New York; and I confess I thought him an empty-hearted fellow until one night he stayed for hours in my cabin, talking of the civil war in Ireland with a passionate emotion and idealism for which he was prepared to sacrifice all he had gained. He was coming back to enlist as a recruit in the Irish Republican army unless the British government called off the Black and Tans and made a fair offer of liberty.

I argued with him long and earnestly, put England's point of view as well as I knew how, but could not damp down the blazing fire in his soul when he spoke of the heroic struggle of his people for their dream of freedom. His pale face flushed as he talked, and a long lock of black hair fell over his forehead; and the whole aspect of the man was changed from that light-hearted table companion whom I had admired only as a humorist with an actor's talent of grotesque mimicry.

That evening at dinner he was in his best form, and his impersonations of movie stars rehearsing a new production made little Sonia Recochewitz laugh until she wept, and our two other table partners, who happened to be young Viscount Mickleham, of the Foreign Office, and his sister Beatrice, burst into such loud peals of mirth that I think we were rather a scandal in the dining-saloon, and our respectability was only saved by Mickleham's title and position, for neither of which did he care one straw. I noticed angry glances about us from old fogies at other tables, but then was caught by one glance which was not hostile but amused and envious.

It was when I met the eyes of Janet Brandt, who was sitting at a table placed rather separately and aloofly in an alcove on the captain's side of the saloon. She was much too far from us to hear a word of our nonsense, but the sound of our laughter reached her, and perhaps she had seen O'Calloran's funny faces. She watched us with intent, smiling eyes, and, as I have said, there was a look on her face of wistful envy, as though she would have given much to join our party. She was startled when our eyes met, as if she had betrayed some secret, and a second later she answered some remark of her aunt demurely.

Miss Alice Brandt wore some of her famous diamonds, and even across the spacious dining-saloon of the *Aquitania* I saw the glint of them in her hair and round her long, thin neck. She sat very straight—an elegant, austere lady, who must have been beautiful in her youth when she came up from Georgia as the sister of Jonathan K. Brandt, already founding the great fortune of his house and family. She had two guests at her table, one of them being George Hecht, the great financier, and the other a little fat old lady, scandalously *décolletée*, with artificial roses on her cheeks, who was doubtless Mrs. George Hecht. Not an amusing company for Janet, aged twenty, I guessed. No wonder she had a stifled look, a wistfulness for some of the fun of youth, a desire, sometimes peeping through shyness and fear, as I thought I had seen, to escape from smugness.

Mickleham saw where my eyes were straying and grinned at me.

"Not a chance, old friend! The man who marries Janet Brandt will certainly be very

rich, but he must also be very respectable and offer a famous name in return for the millions. That's the idea in taking her to Europe."

"What about you?" I asked. "'Viscountess Mickleham' doesn't sound bad, and—you're a pretty fellow."

"Yes; but not respectable," said his sister Beatrice.

"Mine is a family without morals or intelligence," said Mickleham, with mock sadness. "My sister Beatrice drinks three cocktails before luncheon. That is merely a modern way of revealing inherited tendencies. We have always grabbed at the fun of life and risked the headache or the executioner's ax. Hence our poverty. Sad, indeed, but not undeserved!"

ON GOING to my cabin that evening, I found a little note on the dressing-table. It was from Miss Alice Brandt, who graciously invited me to dine at her table on the following evening. "My niece," she added, "will be equally pleased." So, in spite of gazing at me as though I were as transparent as a window-pane, the lady had condescended to be aware of my presence on board and to distinguish me from the great horde who were enchanted by a nod from her. I wondered what had caused me to be favored in that way. I think it was Miss Janet's favor which had brought me the invitation; but certainly, on the following evening, when I was extra careful with my dress-tie and chose my very best cuff-links of imitation gold, in deference to the Brandt diamonds, the aunt was exceedingly gracious and more talkative than the niece. I learned that she had taken a house in Paris—Avenue Victor Hugo, of course—and hoped I would spare time to call on them and perhaps take Janet to see the right things.

"Picture-galleries, museums, and such like?" I suggested, and Miss Alice Brandt said, "You know them so well, I'm sure; it would be a privilege for Janet." But looking over at the niece, I thought I saw a wish for something more exciting than picture-galleries and museums, and she guessed my thought, for she smiled and then blushed.

"I would like to see something of life in Paris," she said; and she spoke that word "life" as though it held a great adventure.

"Undoubtedly, my dear," said Miss Alice

Brandt; "we're not going to be hermits, I assure you. The ambassador will bring us all the people worth knowing, and we have many friends over there already. The Hepworth Hobsons are there, the Brixhams of Milwaukee, the Comton Wackfords of Boston, and half New York."

"Yes—but, Aunt Alice," said Janet, "those people are so familiar—and so rich. I want to get a glimpse of people who live cheaply and have all the fun, it seems to me—the young people who make a game of life."

Miss Alice Brandt was undoubtedly startled by this queer outburst. She looked at Janet with shrewd eyes, not unkindly but searchingly, and the girl avoided that gaze by fiddling with a trinket on her wrist.

"I'm sorry you're tired of old friends, Janet," said Miss Brandt. "Some of them, I admit, are wearisome if one sees too much of them. However, there are young people in Paris who will be welcome to our house. Young Goldmann, for instance, and his sister Ruth."

"Oh, insufferable!" said Janet; but the words were spoken as a kind of whisper, and did not seem to reach Miss Alice Brandt, who continued her remarks.

"He is great friends now, I am told, with the young Duc de Méricourt, who called on us last year when we were on Long Island. I thought him charming, and I know he was greatly smitten with you, my dear."

She tapped her niece playfully on the wrist, but Janet pulled her arm away quickly, and said rather bitterly:

"Smitten with my dollars, Aunt Alice. It was too transparent!"

Miss Alice Brandt laughed.

"Oh, well, a few dollars are useful to old families. But youth is youth, all the same, and boys and girls must find their mates."

"Not in the money market," said Janet.

"You forget yourself, my dear," said Miss Alice Brandt very icily; and turning away from her niece, she inquired whether England had changed much since the war. She had been told that young men were not so well behaved as before, and that the younger generation had lost some of its courtesy. We pursued that inquiry for a little while, and then conversation languished. It was Miss Janet who revived it.

"How much you laugh at your table!

Who is that little lady like a wood-sprite? I would like to know her so much."

I mentioned the name Recochewitz, and Miss Alice Brandt looked severe.

"I am told she is not at all respectable."

"I know nothing about her past," I said. "Now, in the present, she is a charming little creature, full of beautiful fancies and merry thoughts like fairy-tales."

"Not a good companion for Janet," said Miss Alice Brandt. "I'm not a snob, thank God, but naturally, with our name, we have to draw the line at Gipsies."

"I like the Gipsy heart," said Janet.

Miss Alice Brandt raised her eyebrows at me, as though to say: "Youth is very dangerous. We shall have to be careful of this girl." It was a confidence inspired, perhaps, by a touch of gray each side of my forehead. We were two old fogies who understood the perils of life. So I interpreted her glance, and was reminded of middle age, which sometimes I was apt to forget.

OUTSIDE, in the garden lounge, after dinner, Miss Alice Brandt, as a further sign of confidence, left us together while she went to fetch a wrap, or perhaps to read one of those French novels which she was careful to keep from her niece. For a time we chatted about music and the theatre season in New York. Then I asked Miss Janet how she looked forward to a year in Europe.

She spoke suddenly, with great frankness.

"It will be hateful! I'm being taken over on exhibition. The richest young woman in New York—that house in the Avenue Victor Hugo—I know exactly what it will be like. There will be an incessant stream of American callers, bankers, business men and American officers, afraid to talk straight to me, or be anything but formal and polite, because I'm a great heiress and beyond their reach. There will be some of the French aristocracy, like the Duc de Méricourt, calling with hothouse flowers, sending their mothers to call on my aunt, smirking and scraping with a conventional gallantry—and all the time I shall miss the reality of life and all the things that other girls have."

"What are those?" I asked, amused.

"Freedom, companionship, forgetfulness of money standards, sincerity, and—"

She hesitated for a second or more, and then looked at me with a kind of forced courage and added, "The chance of love."

"Lord!" I said. "No wonder your aunt looks worried if you talk to her like that!"

"I don't." She laughed more merrily than I had heard her yet. "I've always lived in terror of Aunt Alice."

She told me something of the way in which she had been brought up. A series of timid English governesses who tried to make a snob of her and hid all the realities of life. They were abject in their worship of wealth. Then a school for young ladies in Massachusetts, presided over by a lady who gave orders to all the junior teachers that Miss Janet Brandt was to be treated with special care and consideration. That meant that her mistakes were overlooked, her tempers excused, because her name was a good advertisement to the school. It meant that the mistresses toadied to her, and that many of the girls, though not all, made "a goose" of her in order to be invited to her parties.

"Horrible!" I said. "I wonder you survived it and kept a sense of humor."

"I haven't," she confessed rather miserably. "I'm nothing but a negative thing labeled with the dollar-sign."

"I think there's something pretty positive about you," I told her, with a smile, and I think she took that for a compliment.

She whispered to me, for her aunt was coming down the corridor:

"I want to meet people on equal terms, without the dollar-sign labeled all over me. Will you help me? In Paris?"

"I'll have a try," I said, rather cautiously; but she made a pledge of it.

"Promise?"

"Yes; I promise."

It was a pretty foolish thing to promise, as I found out afterward when I was "in the basket," as the French would say. And even that night, when I lay in my bunk thinking over the girl's talk, I had a kind of premonition that if I kept that promise it would lead to trouble. There was something unusual about Janet Brandt. Underneath her timidity, which made one's first impression quite false, there was a spirit of adventure. Physically as well as mentally, she was behind a mask. She had called herself "a plain girl," though Mickleham, who ought to know, having been a

great philanderer, had called her once a "*belle laide*." But just as through her rather sulky shyness there had appeared an ardent and sensitive quality of mind, so at times, when her eyes were bright, a shadow seemed to pass from her face and reveal its beauty. Well, perhaps "beauty" is too strong a word, but I could understand a man younger than I being fascinated by the Gipsy look of this Brandt girl. "Gipsy" was the word, and she had used it herself.

ON THE fifth day of the voyage I received a special invitation to step across the mystic and material barrier dividing the first from the second class. It was from Paul Hirst, who wrote that he had been nominated as chairman of the concert in aid of the seamen's orphanage and desired my support in this ordeal, provided that I could tear myself away from millionaires and mighty people and condescend to endure the society of second-class nonentities of less wealth and more intelligence. I damned his impertinence and accepted the invitation.

Certainly the level of entertainment was vastly superior to that which had already been given in the first class, and I agreed with Hirst that his crowd was more interesting than mine, because more youthful and rather at the beginning of life's adventure than approaching the fag end of the middle period. Still, as I told him, I would not exchange Sonia Recochewitz as a table companion with any of his particular fancies.

He was too nervous to argue with me, and I could see that underneath his apparent easy manner as chairman he was highly strung. Perhaps that accounted for the rather grim wit with which he prefaced some of the "turns," and for some scathing passages, meant no doubt to be satirical and humorous, which he put into a speech in aid of the charity for which the concert was given. He had a natural gift of eloquence, heightened by the absolute sincerity of his words and the grace of his delivery.

His theme was the suffering of the world's children as the victims of war. It was they who paid, he said, in their bodies and in their souls, for the cruelties and greed of the old men who had brought civilization to ruin. He gave some very moving pictures of



Her next performance was to break a piece of bread from her roll and throw it with unerring aim at a one-armed young man at the other side of the room.

starving and stricken childhood in Vienna, Poland, and other countries which he had visited as a newspaper reporter, and I saw how his words gripped his audience in that second-class saloon and stirred their emotions. Then he launched into a flaming satire against the old ones, as he called them, the great somebodies of the world, with big stomachs under big waistcoats, and hearts as small as hazel-nuts, and brains sharpened by cunning and craft in the pursuit of wealth. They were not neglectful of charity, but made use of it as a camouflage of their profiteering, as a life insurance against the revolt of misery.

"In this ship," said Paul Hirst, "but not in the second class, there are many kings of Commerce and lords of Labor. Last night they were asked to give to this charity for the children of those who were drowned in their service, the orphans of the seamen who carry their cargoes and their profits. How much did they subscribe? It worked out at five dollars a head. Not a great tax for men of millions and women whose diamonds would rescue starving cities. Here, in the second class, we should do better than that, out of our small savings. Let us teach the first-class folk a lesson in charity!"

In some such words—I don't remember them exactly—Paul Hirst made his appeal, and though, when he sat down, there was loud applause, I fancy that some of his fellow passengers looked uncomfortable and even alarmed by the tone of his speech, or at least that part of it. One of the ship's officers was visibly annoyed, and afterward spoke to me on the way back to the first class.

"That fellow is a darned Bolshevik! If the first-class passengers get to hear of his attack, there'll be trouble for the company."

NO REPORT of Hirst's speech came across to the first class, and there was no trouble over it. The only person to whom I mentioned it was Miss Janet Brandt, who asked me how I had enjoyed the concert.

"The concert was wonderful," I told her, "and there was a speech by a young friend of mine which nearly broke up the whole show. Good thing the captain wasn't there!"

Then I described Paul Hirst to her, and gave the outline of his remarks.

The girl seemed strangely moved, almost distressed.

"I think he's right," she said. "When I read about all the agony of the world, this kind of thing seems to burn my neck."

She caught hold of a rope of pearls about her neck and gave them a little tug.

"They're beautiful!" I said, touching them.

"Oh, I hate the very sight of them!" she answered.

Afterward she told me she would like to meet Paul Hirst.

"That's easy," I told her, without a thought of Hirst's peculiar character. "The boy lives with his sister in Paris. I can bring you together one day."

"I hope you will," said Janet Brandt, "as part of your promise."

"What promise?"

She was vexed because I had forgotten the promise to show her "life" in Paris, life more living than that in picture-galleries and museums, and youth whom she could meet without being "labeled with the dollar-sign."

"I can see myself getting into trouble with Aunt Alice," I said chaffingly, and that seemed to amuse her, for she gave a queer little laugh and looked at me with what I called her "Gipsy face."

"Aunt Alice needn't know. After all, I have a right to my own adventures."

"Certainly," I agreed. "I'm all for liberty."

That was the last word but one I had with the girl before she and her aunt went off the ship at Cherbourg. The last word was when Miss Alice Brandt allowed me to shake hands with her, or, rather, to take her cold, white hand in mine for a moment, and when Janet touched me on the arm and whispered as she passed. The word was "Remember"—King Charles' last word on the scaffold!

Hirst went off at Cherbourg, with some other passengers from the second class, and I was able to exchange a few words with him as he stood on the tender, looking up to the castle heights of the ship he had just left.

"Give my love to Pat!" I shouted.

He could not see me among the faces leaning over the side of the lower deck through a wet darkness shot by bewildering

lights. He recognized my voice and shouted an answer.

"See you in Paris soon!"

IT WAS, however, more than two months later that I went to Paris from London, and some weeks after that before I had an opportunity of seeing Paul Hirst and his madcap sister, the adorable Pat.

It was Pat who opened the door of the *appartement* on the fifth floor of a dirty old house at the bad end of the Rue de la Pompe. Though it was six in the afternoon, she was in her dressing-gown—once of elegant pink silk, but now less elegant because of ink stains and a tattered lining. Her orange-colored hair was loose over her shoulders, and her feet were bare except for one carpet slipper. The other lay abandoned up the passage.

She was not at all abashed to see me standing there, but much surprised.

"An ancient ghost!" she cried. "I thought it was Paul back from his hopeless quest."

"What quest?" I asked, following her into the passage.

"Work. He lost his job after the American trip, and is now a free lance again. You know what that means. Rigid economy, and only occasional orgies to maintain a sense of humor."

"Don't you put on any clothes?" I asked her, looking at her little white foot on the cold oilcloth.

"Oh, I'm quite decent," she answered. "Don't let your sense of propriety suffer any unnecessary shock. I've been mending an evening frock into which I shall presently jump, if you'll keep an eye on the kettle in the back kitchen. I dine to-night with a Russian prince. He has saved up ten francs for a banquet in my honor."

"Is he the latest?" I asked. "What has happened to the young French lieutenant who was sick with passion for you last time I was here?"

"Oh, François? He's still sick."

"You're a ruthless woman!" I told her. "*La Belle Dame sans merci*."

"I give a lot of fun to my friends," she answered calmly. "And so many of them love me that I hate to hurt any of them by showing preference to one."

"My dear kid," I said in a fatherly way, "it's time you settled down as a wife and a mother."

"Not on your life!" said Miss Pat. "Give me liberty or give me death. Besides, I have to mend Paul's shirts and see that he keeps his nails clean and his soul bright. God has laid that duty upon me. And do you mind going into that cupboard and casting your blear eye on the kettle while I slip into my frock? My Russian prince hasn't known me long enough to enjoy the privilege of my dressing-gown."

"He'll tame you all right if he's fool enough to marry you," I told her. "All Russians are czars under their skins."

"I want to be tamed," said Pat; "but 'oh, the difference to me!' as the poet sings."

She whisked off to her bedroom, where she sang the latest *chansons* of the boulevards in a clear, high voice, while I burned my fingers with a kettle on an oil-stove and made some tea which had been put ready on a side-table. Then there was a ring at the bell, and I let in Paul, who did not seem in the least surprised to see me, and, without formal greeting, growled that he had forgotten the cursed latch-key again.

He was in a savage temper with life generally. His work in America had not pleased his editor, and he had been flung off the paper which he had served for two years or more. Now he was writing short stories which no one would buy.

"They're too good," he told me, with the calm arrogance of youth. "I write about the truth of things, and, of course, that's the most unmarketable commodity."

He was shabbier than usual and rather thinned down, I thought. Probably he was going without proper food so that Pat might get her share of fun. I had known him to do that before, in the old days, though he kept it a dark secret from Pat, who would have starved to death rather than let him go hungry for her sake.

"Pat looks fine," I said. "More beautiful than before, and just as merry as ever."

"Oh, she's all right," he said casually. "Only about fifteen poor swine hanging round her for any pearl of wit she likes to throw at them."

"One day," I warned him, "she'll fall head over heels in love, instead of playing Beatrice to every Benedick."

"Don't you worry," said Paul. "She knows how to take care of herself, and I keep a sharp eye on the hussy."

"Oh, you do, do you?" exclaimed Pat

herself, who overheard the last remark and now appeared in her evening frock of black silk, cut low at the neck and short at the skirt, as the fashion then was, though frocks have grown long in Paris now.

She rumbled her brother's hair, pulled his tie tighter and kissed him on the forehead.

"The simple youth thinks his wicked sister can't escape his jealous eye. He thinks she hasn't escaped a thousand times to most dangerous adventures of which he knoweth nothing."

"I can't prevent you playing the giddy goat; that's certain," growled Paul. But I knew this brother and sister well enough to be sure of their devotion to each other.

The Russian prince came—a pale-faced, whimsical fellow, who spoke French perfectly and English hardly at all. He was a clerk in some Paris warehouse and horribly poor, but not at all unhappy, as he confessed, because poverty in Paris seemed to him more amusing than his old days of luxury in Saint Petersburg before the war, and enormously more amusing than the stench and filth of trenches on the Russian front, followed by the terrors of Bolshevism.

"Where shall we dine?" he asked Pat. "I have no less than twenty-five francs for this evening's frolic."

"Twenty-five!" cried Pat in French, without a trace of English accent. "Why, we shall be able to have wine with a label on it!"

They went off together like children to a school-treat; and Paul dined with me near the Luxembourg Gardens. After we had discussed the state of Europe, the cost of living in Paris and the chance of revolution in England—Paul taking the gloomiest view of everything—I put into words a thought that I had had at the back of my mind.

"There's a girl I know in Paris who's rather lonely. May I bring her along to see Pat one day?"

"Why not?" said Paul. "Pat knows a whole bunch of girls who play a lone hand. Some of 'em feed with us at Suzanne's—you know, the cheap eating-house in the Rue de la Victoire. Bring her along one night. It's a rowdy crowd, but good fun, and liberty of speech."

"Splendid!"

It was of Janet Brandt that I was thinking, and of the promise I had made

her more than two months before, on the *Aquitania*. I had only had one glimpse of her since I had been in Paris, and that was in the Bois, where she was driving with Miss Alice Brandt in an expensive-looking limousine. They stopped where the avenue goes up to the lake and greeted a young man, obviously French by the cut of his clothes and the vivacity of his manner, who was strolling along the sidewalk with two Russian wolfhounds. He stepped into the road with bared head, as though in the presence of royalty, and when Miss Janet held out her hand through the window, he put it to his lips. She laughed a little at that gesture and withdrew her hand hurriedly, as it seemed to me. Miss Alice Brandt sat up very stiff and straight, and looked like a French *grande dame*. As for Janet, of whom I had only a fleeting glance, it seemed to me that she was rather pale, and not much amused with herself, as the French would say.

THAT impression was confirmed when I called the next day in the Avenue Victor Hugo, where they were handsomely installed with English servants and a French chef and Louis XVI furniture and decorations.

"You are magnificent here," I said to Miss Alice Brandt. "It's marvelous how quickly you have arranged everything!"

"We miss the home comforts," she said, as though living in a makeshift place; "but it's not bad, and I dare say we can put up with it for the season. The dear ambassador has been very kind."

"And you?" I asked Janet. "You like Paris?"

"I have been to the picture-galleries and museums," she said, with an elusive smile, in which I fancied a reproach.

"And you have plenty of company?"

"Quite a traffic of old friends," said Miss Alice Brandt. "The Coppins of Greenwich, the Arkwrights of Albany, Mr. Henry J. Budd, Mary Schwarz and her little niece, General Hooper—any number of New Yorkers. We have also met some charming French families, the old *noblesse*."

"Among them the Duc de Méricourt, I presume? I see he is in Paris."

Miss Alice looked at Janet in a furtive way, and then turned to me again.

"A most delightful young man, and most

attentive! His mother and I have become quite confidential. She is the sweetest old creature!"

"She frightens me," said Janet. "I can't bear the way she stares at me through her lorgnettes or the patronizing way in which she taps my hand and calls me '*charmante mademoiselle*.'"

Some of the "traffic" came into the drawing-room for tea—a good-natured crowd, but perhaps a shade too formal in their manners both to Miss Alice Brandt and to Janet, who seemed uninterested in their company.

I had some minutes of private talk with the girl, and she confessed her boredom.

"Aunt Alice forgets I'm only twenty. All these people are very kind, but——"

I helped her out.

"Middle-aged and frumpy, eh?"

"I'm becoming a frump myself," she declared, with a sigh.

"What about Paris?"

"Paris is wonderful!" said Janet. "But I only see it as though I sat in the stalls of a theatre. I want to get into its life a little—into some of the rooms behind the windows in back streets."

"Been to any French restaurants?"

She laughed and said:

"The Ritz and the Continental. The people there were all from the Ritz-Carlton and the Vanderbilt."

It was then I asked her if she would like to come one night to a queer little place where she would get to know some of the real life of Paris—students, writers, working girls, a cosmopolitan crowd of impecunious youth.

Her eyes lit up at the idea of it, and when I asked, "What about your aunt?" she seemed to think that there would be no trouble if I asked Miss Brandt's permission on her behalf.

"She thinks the world of you!"

"It's my gray hairs," I said. "They give austere aunts a sense of security, alas!"

MISS JANET was not wrong in her idea. When I asked Miss Brandt whether I could conduct her niece to a museum and take her to a little dinner later, she was delighted, and was pleased to say that she would trust Janet to my care and discretion with the utmost confidence.

I am bound to confess, however, that

my conscience troubled me with unusual prickings when, after a brief visit to the Carnavalet Museum, in which I tried to remember all that I had forgotten about the French Revolution, I took the girl in the Métro—for the first time in her life she traveled underground and did a little strap-hanging, which seemed to amuse her vastly—and conducted her to the Restaurant Julie in a little street off the Boulevard Montparnasse. I could not understand this mental trouble of mine, because the little eating-house was perfectly respectable, as was the company we were likely to find there; but my mind became weighted with the idea of the Brandt dollars.

"If this girl dies from ptomaine poisoning out of a tin of sardines," I thought, "the United States will demand my body for the torturers."

Janet looked as though she were out for tremendous adventure, but before we went through the swing doors with their pink curtains, she put her hand on my arm and gave me a kind of royal command.

"Don't introduce me to any one as Janet Brandt. Let me be Janet Gordon for once. It's my mother's name, and doesn't scare people with such a noise of dollars."

"Just as you like," I said; and it was as Janet Gordon that I presented to her Pat Hirst and Paul, who were already seated at one of the little tables, which presently, as the door swung to and fro, became crowded with a queer collection of young men and women, most of whom seemed to know each other.

Pat Hirst was in one of her riotous moods, and her behavior would have been scandalous if the company had been easily scandalized, which undoubtedly it was not. Making a place for Janet by her side without ceremony, she took up her knife and fork, banged their handles on the table, and shouted out, "*À boire!*"—signifying a desire for drink—to a French waiter with the face of a gargoyle of Notre Dame illuminated by a sense of humor. Her next performance was to break a piece of bread from her roll and throw it with unerring aim at a one-armed young man—French, by the look of him—at the other side of the room, who turned the other cheek when it struck him, and replied very skilfully with a rose from a glass on his table. The petals scattered over Pat's red hair, and the effect of this

retort courteous was received with applause by the company.

"*C'est chevaleresque, ça!*" said a girl, who was obviously Russian—an unmistakable type to me—and a young lady of distinction, I guessed, in spite of a cheap frock.

Paul presented me.

"Princess Maniloff. You've met her brother."

I guessed that it was the brother who had taken Pat to a banquet with twenty-five francs, and guessed rightly, for he came in later and bowed very low to Miss Pat before making a grimace of comical despair because there was no room at her table. Pat was not at all in a sympathetic mood with him, or in a conversational mood with any one. She was in a singing mood, and gave voice to some *poilu* songs to which, in the evil and heroic years, the French troops had gone marching up the roads. The one-armed young Frenchman who had been hit by her bit of bread took up the chorus of them, beating time with his soup-spoon; and some of the other girls joined in, laughing between the verses at Pat, who had made her table-napkin into a *poilu's* cap and put it jauntily on one side of her carrotty hair, looking as pretty as any Miss Impudence I have seen.

Paul frowned at her and growled a rebuke.

"This isn't the Folies Bergère. I can't hear to eat my soup. Can't you be serious for once?"

"*Jamais de la vie!*" said Pat, raising a glass of the vilest *vin ordinaire* and reciting a verse of Ronsard's in praise of the grape. She seemed the most popular person. From many of the other tables young men of divers nationalities raised their glasses and kissed them to her in salutation, and I noticed how, now and then, girls came to her table to whisper a few words, to touch her hand, to give a little tug at her red hair.

I watched Janet—Janet Gordon, as I had called her—in this queer company. Amazingly queer it must have been to her! She sat very still and silent opposite Paul Hirst, who had not yet spoken a single word to her, glancing at the people about her, taking in all the scene with a curious smile of interest and enjoyment, and occasionally, I thought, as her eyes rested on Pat, with admiration and amazement. Once she burst into a low-toned laugh as Pat held the waiter's hand—the gargoyle-faced old

fellow—and coaxed him to bring her another portion of *asperges*. I noticed that Janet wore a plain black dress, without a single jewel about her, as though she were afraid of being detected as a rich young woman, and I noticed also that Paul, though he was as silent as herself, studied her now and then when she was not aware of his gaze. Presently he spoke to her.

"Been in Paris long?"

Janet was startled by his sudden advance toward conversational exercise, and flushed rather vividly with her usual shyness, but answered readily:

"About two months. I'm American."

"So I guessed," said Paul. "I was over there two months ago. What boat did you cross in?"

She told him, and he seemed surprised.

"So was I! I don't remember you at all."

He took it for granted that she had been a second-class passenger, and I was amused when she did not undeceive him.

"Your speech was very interesting," she said.

"Think so?" said Paul doubtfully. "I loathe speaking. Always say the wrong thing."

"You said the right things then."

I did not hear any more of this conversation because I found myself engaged in an argument with Princess Maniloff on Russian literature in which I was hopelessly routed. By this time her brother had found a corner at our table next to Pat, with whom he flirted in a whimsical way. I heard her offer to mend his shirts as a reward for the banquet he had given her. This offer, inspired by the frayed condition of his cuffs, touched him almost to tears, and he vowed that no such charity had been known on earth since some Russian saint whose name I have forgotten.

IT WAS ten o'clock when I turned to Janet and reminded her that it was time to go.

"Why such hurry?" asked Paul in his grumpiest tone. "Miss Gordon and I seem to agree about most things, and it's a pity to break the unusual spell."

"Another half-hour!" cried Janet, like a pleading child.

"Remember your aunt," I said.

"Oh, aunts mustn't be humored," said Pat, intervening. "My young life was

nearly wrecked by an aunt. We're going to have some music presently at Yvonne's flat."

"Who's Yvonne?" I asked.

She pointed to a handsome, white-faced girl who was putting one of the little French rolls into her hand-bag.

"That girl like a saint in a Burne-Jones window. She plays divinely and doesn't get enough to eat."

Janet Brandt looked distressed.

"Is that why she is saving her bread?"

"Oh, lots of us do that," said Pat, "when funds are low. One doesn't waste good food if one belongs to a really good society like this. The Intellectuals, don't you know."

Janet looked at me with an inquiring glance, as though to ask, "Is that true or a joke?"

"*La vie de Bohème*," I said. "They make a game of poverty."

After that we said good-by, but not before Paul had growled out a sheepish invitation to Janet.

"There's always a cup of tea going in the Rue de la Pompe—any old time you feel like it. We might continue our discussion one day. Pat's always pleased to have callers, aren't you, Pat?"

Pat pulled her brother's ear.

"You're not, sulky one! You hate 'em like poison." Then she turned to Janet with a smile that was irresistible. "If Paul invites you, I'm your handmaiden. I'd love you to come, Janet Gordon."

On the way back to the Avenue Victor Hugo, Janet held my arm tight in hers and repeated again and again that she had enjoyed every minute of the evening.

"It was all wonderful!" she said. "Like a fairy-tale. How splendid to be like that! I loved what you said: 'They make a game of poverty.'"

"It's the only way," I told her. "Otherwise poverty is hell."

She pulled something out of her pocket and said, "I've taken this as a souvenir," and showed me, to my amazement, a *petit pain*, like the roll which the girl Yvonne had slipped into her bag. Then she said one of those queer things which startled me.

"I'd like to need it one day. I agree with your friend that no one knows life who doesn't know hunger."

"What friend is that?" I asked.

"Paul, who is like the apostle."

"If the old Paul was as grumpy in his youth as this one—" I remarked, but before I could finish my sentence, the footman had opened the wrought-iron door in the Avenue Victor Hugo, and I had to say good-night. The girl pressed my hand, and I felt that her own was hot, as though there were a fever in her, when she thanked me "a thousand times" for the pleasure I had given her.

THE next time I saw her was a month later—I had been to Austria to study a bankrupt state—at a reception given by Miss Alice Brandt, which was quite a brilliant affair, as I saw when I drove up in a Paris taxi and found myself in a stream of many handsome automobiles. The American colony was attending in great strength, and there was also a number of distinguished people in French society.

The British ambassador and his lady and several members of the embassy were early arrivals. Miss Alice Brandt received her guests, and the Brandt diamonds glimmered in her hair and about her neck and wrists, so that she looked very imposing. Janet stood by her aunt's side in a white frock, which I suppose was a French model of extreme cost, though I know nothing of these things and only admired her simplicity. Something had happened to change her appearance. She was thin, I thought, and rather worn, like a girl at the end of a harassing season; but there was a new brightness in her eyes, and her whole manner was more vivacious and assured. She was no longer the timid, shrinking girl I had first met in Fifth Avenue.

It was quite late in the evening, when some of the guests had gone, that Miss Alice Brandt drew me on one side and said, "I'm worried about Janet."

"In what way?" I asked.

"I can hardly say," replied Miss Brandt. "The girl is a mystery to me. She has lost her appetite—doesn't eat enough to feed a bird, and she slips away in the afternoons, and sometimes in the evenings, without letting me know anything of her whereabouts. Sometimes I think all kinds of dreadful things. And she only laughs at me when I ask for her confidence."

"She seems very merry and bright," I said, looking over to the alcove where she



Janet stood full in the lamplight. She was wearing a little diamond crown, like a princess. Paul made a sudden step forward, and I put my hand on his arm and said, "Steady, old man!"

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stood laughing with the Duc de Méricourt and several ladies.

"That worries me most of all," said Miss Brandt. "She comes back from some of her mysterious expeditions—exploring Paris, she calls them—with her eyes strangely alight and her cheeks flushed and a strange, unnatural gaiety. But at dinner she refuses all her food, and just picks and pecks at it." "She seems attracted by the Duc de Méricourt," I said.

Miss Alice Brandt took me by the wrist and drew me closer.

"My dear," she said, "the young man has set his heart on her, but she treats him as a figure of fun. He is most patient and persistent."

I confess that I wondered whether love or the Brandt dollars were the cause of the young man's patience; but I did not reveal that thought to Miss Brandt.

IT WAS Viscount Mickleham who gave me a clue to some of Janet's private adventures during the past month. That young man turned up preposterously late, shook hands with Miss Brandt, bowed in his elegant, smiling way to Janet, who blushed exceedingly at the sight of him, and prepared to walk down-stairs again and so out to some more amusing company when he caught sight of me.

"So you're back again, you old panderer!" he exclaimed.

I tucked my arm through his, and asked what the deuce he meant by calling me names like that.

"What about Janet Gordon and her double life?" he asked. "You will get into trouble about that little plot."

"Plot be hanged!" I said. "And, anyhow, what do you know about Janet Gordon?"

"I called on the adorable Pat, and found her at tea with a young person whom she introduced as Janet Gordon—as poorly dressed as a *couturière* in a poor way of business. I recognized her instantly as Janet Brandt, and wondered what the game was. She went as white as my shirt-front when she saw me."

"Did you give her away?" I asked him; but he shook his head and said:

"I try to play the game like a little gentleman. If a girl calls herself any old thing, I regard it as her affair and not mine."

I was astonished that he knew Pat Hirst, and told him so, to his great amusement.

"My dear lad," he said, "I've been in love with her for three years. I went to the United States to forget her impudence, and came back again to warm my soul at her red hair."

"Why don't you marry the child?" I asked him frankly, as an old comrade, and he answered by saying:

"Why doesn't the child marry me? Because she's not such a blooming fool. A penniless peer, with no visible means of subsistence without the help of money-lenders, is no catch for a girl who earns her living and gets a lot of fun out of the game."

He walked up toward the Étoile, while I burrowed into the Métro and made my way to the Rue de la Pompe.

Pat was alone, reading a French novel, smoking a *petit caporal*, and stewing some coffee on the oil-stove.

"What's all this about Janet Gordon?" I asked. And, staring at me blankly, she replied,

"What's all what?"

"How many times has she been here since I left?"

"Pretty often," said Pat. "Any objection? Paul is madly in love with her. They talk idealism, socialism, and all that kind of pap until I get tired. I'm afraid I'll lose little brother Paul. He's badly hit this time."

"Good God!" I said, in a sudden panic, thinking of Miss Alice Brandt and all the Brandts of Fifth Avenue and Wall Street.

"You seem worried," said Pat. "Ladle out that coffee and pull your nerves together. Paul has gone for a long tramp to dream of his lady. Presently he'll be home and write a sonnet."

"Look here," I said; "do you know who that girl is?"

"No scandals!" said Pat reprovingly. "In our sphere of life we live and let live. There's nothing wrong with Janet except poverty, and an ill-tempered aunt who wants to keep her caged."

"Poverty!" I exclaimed.

"That's no crime," said Pat. "I hate to think of that child not getting enough to eat. She's ravenous when we invite her to pot-luck, and won't waste the smallest crumb of bread."

I was too astounded to make any comment on those remarks.

Pat went on to tell me that Janet Gordon was a student of music in Paris, who led an unhappy life with the querulous aunt, and could not afford to buy herself any little trinkets or frocks.

"She always wears the same old black slip, and was frightfully excited the other day when I gave her a little brooch worth about three francs."

"Pat," I said, "you're a creature without nerves, so you won't get excited when I give Janet Gordon away. Her real name is Janet Brandt."

"That doesn't interest me in the least," said Pat. "What's in a name?"

"A deuce of a lot," I said, annoyed that my revelation had been without effect. "In this particular case there are God knows how many million dollars in that name. Haven't you heard of the Brandts of New York—the Brandt millions? Well, Janet is the heiress who will get most of them when she's twenty-one."

Pat laughed loud and long, and then asked me not to pull her leg so late at night. Nothing would induce her to believe that I was talking in sober earnest, and she passed the joke on to Paul when he let himself in with his latch-key.

Paul smiled grimly.

"Janet's one of us," he said. "She knows the game of poverty all right. Down to its bare bones. And, like me, she hates the rich world with its infernal inequalities."

"Doing anything to-morrow night?" I asked.

He told me that he had nothing particular to do, and didn't object to dining with me.

WE DINED at the Griffon, which he thought was a tourists' trap, and then strolled with me through the Champs Elysées toward the Avenue Victor Hugo. On the way he told me that he had a rather decent job in view, and if it came off he might change his state in life.

"In what way?" I asked.

"The matrimonial way," he said rather sheepishly, and hastened to explain that Pat would never marry so long as he was a bachelor. She considered it her sacred duty to look after him. That was very rough on her, and, anyhow, unless he married now, he never would.

"A nice girl?" I inquired; and he said, in a mystic way,

"The soul I've been searching for—Janet Gordon."

"Look here," I said sharply, stopping under the trees of the Champs Elysées; "what I told Pat was true. Janet Gordon is Janet Brandt—too rich for you, Paul—out of your world!"

Something in my voice frightened him. Yet he would not believe me. He would not believe me until something happened outside the house in the Avenue Victor Hugo.

It was after dinner, and Miss Brandt was going to the opera with her niece and young de Méricourt, as I knew from what they had told me the night before. Their car was waiting for them, and I spoke to the driver.

"Is Miss Brandt starting now?"

"In half a minute, I guess," he answered.

Paul and I stood beyond the light of the street-lamp, and I said, "Wait!" He was perfectly silent, and I saw that his face had gone white and that he had a sullen look. In less than half a minute a footman came out with some rugs, which he put into the car. Then two ladies and a young man came through the wrought-iron door and stood for a moment while one of the ladies—Janet—drew on her long white gloves.

She stood full in the lamplight, which shimmered on her rose-colored opera frock. She was wearing a little diamond crown, like a princess.

Paul made a sudden step forward, and I put my hand on his arm and said, "Steady, old man!" His movement made Janet turn her head as she was about to follow Miss Brandt into the car. I am sure she saw Paul. I think their eyes met and spoke to each other. Janet seemed to smile at him in a pleading way; though perhaps that was only my fancy, for a moment later she disappeared into the darkness of the car. Young de Méricourt followed, and they drove away.

"Well, Paul," I said, "seeing is believing."

He swore a violent oath and said something under his breath about having been fooled or tricked, I forget which.

"She was playing the game of poverty," I said, "as a new experience. A foolish thing to do."

He shook my hand off his arm roughly

and told me it was all my damned fault, and, before I could argue the matter, turned on his heel and strode off at a quick pace down the avenue. The poor lad was hard hit. Janet's Gipsy look and some lure in the girl had caught him out, and he knew now, as I had told him, that she was out of his world, unattainable because of a mountain of dollars between them.

THREE weeks in Berlin interrupted my knowledge of this little drama in Paris, and I had to pick up the threads again when I came back. It was red-headed Pat who mended the broken threads in my knowledge and gave me something of a panic.

I met her in the little restaurant where Janet had had her first glimpse behind the scenes of life in Paris. She was dining with Mickleham and several others, but saw me at once when I stood on the inside of the door with pink curtains, and made a funny face at me as though I were in for a hot time. Mickleham waved his hand cheerily.

"Now what's the matter?" I thought, with a guilty conscience.

The matter was quite serious, as I found out later in the evening. Owing to the crowd at Pat's table, where for once she was behaving quite nicely, except for occasional frivolities with the gargoyle-faced waiter, I took a vacant seat at a table where I found two other friends—no other than little Sonia Recochewitz, the Russian dancer whom I had met on the *Aquitania*, and O'Calloran, the young Sinn Feiner, who told me that he had escaped from an English prison after a brief spell of war in County Cork.

Sonia was dancing in Paris, and had not lost her whimsical blend of childish humor and sad knowledge, or her trick of converting a table-napkin into comic animals. I think a love-affair was in progress between her and O'Calloran, judging by the way she fondled his hand with her little white fingers. However, that was none of my business, and when they went away together at nine o'clock, because Sonia was dancing at half-past—she had eaten nothing, I noticed, while O'Calloran dined—I was glad to see Pat jump up from her table and come across the room to me, where I now sat alone.

"A cup of coffee," she commanded. "And silence for a tragic tale!"

"What's the tragedy?" I asked. "Where is Paul?"

She sat down with her elbows on the table and an elin look on her pretty face.

"You're a beauty!" she said, with the deepest sarcasm.

"So I've been told before," I answered very calmly.

"I suppose you're amused with yourself," she went on. "You introduce a dollar-princess in disguise to poor but honest folk, and then breeze away, careless of having stirred up a witch's caldron of trouble and wrecked a number of innocent and happy lives. You're a monster—that's what you are!"

"I'm a man of peace and good will," I told her. "But what's happened? What have you done with Paul?"

She looked at me with mock tragedy, in which I now know there was a little reality.

"I'll tell you one thing that's happened. Paul has abandoned the sister who loved him for better or worse, in sickness and in health, in fat times and lean, who mended his shirts and his socks, who suffered his bad tempers and nursed his sense of humor and rejected the honorable love of innumerable young men, so that she might devote herself body and soul to his temperamental needs. Now he has fled and forsaken her."

"Fled! Where?"

"Paul has gone and got married."

She gave a hysterical little laugh, but began mopping tears from her eyes.

"I feel the loneliest thing in Paris," she said, with a sort of sob in her voice, though she laughed again at comedy mixed with tragedy. "I'll have to marry some one in self-defense."

"Look here," I said, rather terror-stricken; "who has Paul been marrying?"

"Well, he's only done it once," she said; "but it's enough. He and Janet went off in a taxi-cab, and from the post-mark on a picture post-card they seem to be at Avignon."

I confess that in my cowardice the face of one lady haunted me—Miss Alice Brandt. Of course she would make me responsible for the whole business. There would be the very devil of a row.

I spoke bitterly.

"I thought Paul was a sentimental socialist. How does he square that with marrying one of the richest girls in the

United States? Rather inconsistent of little brother, isn't it?"

"That's where you're wrong," said Pat, mopping her eyes with the corner of the table-cloth. "Janet has chucked the dollars."

"What do you mean by that?" I asked. "Nobody can 'chuck' a mountain of money. There it is, and there it stays, increasing at compound interest."

"Janet has chucked 'em all right," said Pat. "Says she prefers the game of poverty. 'And wait till you know the squalor of it, my child,' was what I told her with some passion, which left her cold, with the smile of a medieval saint. That's how she caught Paul. He would have nothing to do with her as a rich young woman. Told her brutally that not even love would make him endure the curse of wealth. 'I come to you in poverty,' she said, 'without a dollar in my purse.' And sentiment became so sticky that I went into the bedroom with a sense of seasickness. Next day Paul kissed me on the forehead like a knight going forth to battle, and said: 'I'll be away for a week or two, old girl. Don't fret, and thanks for being the best sister in the world.' Oh, it was highly amusing!"

Highly amusing, though poor Pat wiped her eye again behind a table-napkin.

She regained her gaiety when Mickleham came over to our table, and said:

"You two seem to be telling secrets. Mayn't I share them?"

"I'll share my last crust with you, Billy," said Pat, "if you'll help me to forget man's ingratitude."

"Meaning Paul or meaning me?" asked Mickleham, and he looked at Pat in a jolly, comradely way, and added in a quiet voice, "I accept the offer of that last crust."

I left them to go to the Avenue Victor Hugo. I had to face this thing out, and the sooner the better. I was right in thinking that Miss Brandt would hold me responsible for what had happened. She did!

"You introduced Janet to disreputable young people," she said, "and deliberately thrust her into the fires of temptation. I have no doubt that it was your own political views which have made the poor child utterly insane."

"What have my political views to do with the case, Miss Brandt?" I asked.

"I always suspected you of being an

anarchist," she answered in her iciest way. "Doubtless it is upon your suggestion that Janet repudiates her inheritance and refuses to touch a single dollar of what I hold in trust for her."

"She will revise her opinion when the shoe begins to pinch," I said. "But, in the mean while, I shall be much obliged if you will withdraw charges against me."

"I beg you to leave my house," said Miss Brandt, "and to understand that our friendship is completely at an end."

IT IS only from the American papers that I have any further knowledge of Miss Alice Brandt, and I am bound to say that she has dealt with a difficult situation rather gallantly. In an interview with a New York reporter at Monte Carlo, she denied the story told with great wealth of dramatic detail that "Richest girl in world weds Paris *apache*. Gives Brandt millions to Bolshvist funds for overthrow of civilization." So far from this being true, stated Miss Brandt, her niece had married, with the full consent of her family, a young English author of remarkable genius, related to the oldest aristocracy in Great Britain—almost of royal blood, it appeared—and the heir to considerable property in the north of England. His sister was engaged to Viscount Mickleham, of Mickleham Park, Norfolk, well known for a time in American society as junior secretary of the British embassy in Washington.

It was the last item of news which took me to Pat's apartment in the Rue de la Pompe. I wondered whether it was as true, or as untrue, as the family history of Paul Hirst. After three rings at the bell, I perceived a bit of paper pinned to the door. It was in Pat's scrawly handwriting.

Address Viscountess Mickleham—strange as it may appear!—Mickleham Hall, Norfolk. Back in Paris when fed up with English respectability. Love to all who love me.

A note from Janet Hirst, just received at my hotel, tells me that she and Paul are still playing the game of poverty in an apartment at Passy. From a postscript I guess that it is rather a strain.

"Funds are low just now," she wrote, "as Paul is unlucky with his work. We are wonderfully happy, but poverty needs a lot of courage."

Inside Stories of Our Secret Service in Russia

The Missing Plans

*In Which It Is Shown That a Spy Doesn't Necessarily
Bear a Label. He May Sometimes Be in the Ranks,
in the Confidence of Your Enemy*

By Hugh S. Martin

Formerly Captain, Intelligence Service, U. S. A.

SOME time after Zarin and Elmore returned from Archangel to Petrograd they were seated in a little anteroom at headquarters, awaiting an audience with the chief, from whom they had received summonses.

"So we see, Elmore, that the science of espionage has advanced even as the science of military operations," Zarin was saying. "There was a time when a spy was a volunteer from the ranks, called out as needed and sent across the lines to study enemy positions, fortifications, strength and so forth. How different it is to-day, with our modern, highly developed intelligence systems. Now spies are stationed behind the lines, frequently in the ranks of the enemy—even in the confidence of the enemy.

"We found, for instance, that the late chief German agent at Archangel had been a prominent resident of that city for ten years. That is not an exceptional case. The recent trial of the very clever German spy, H——, disclosed that he had been a highly respected resident of a prominent British community for more than twenty years, and yet during all that time he had very efficiently performed the duties of his office—an office just as important to German aspirations as any of her diplomatic or consular ones."

Zarin's observations were cut short by the appearance of an orderly, who announced that the chief was waiting for them. A

moment later the two men were seated before him in his private office.

"I have sent for you," the chief began, after the usual salutations, "because I have thought that, after your remarkable success at Archangel, you might care to take up another most perplexing case."

Opening a file of papers which lay upon the table, he proceeded to outline the facts in the case.

For some weeks the important Murman railway, connecting central Russia with Murmansk—Russia's only ice-free northern port—had been threatened by the combined German-Finnish forces operating on the Finnish frontier. Murmansk was an important naval base, and the administration of the port and the railway line was entrusted to the chief of the naval staff there.

Under his direction a recent survey had been made of the entire line and adjacent territory by a commission of military and naval officers and technical experts. Their reports had referred particularly to the many weak points along the line which could not be defended against enemy attack.

A week before, the office of the naval staff at Murmansk had been entered during the night; the safe had been opened and the commission's report had been stolen. Because of the vital importance of the papers, the entire Murman counter-espionage department had been put to work on the case, but their efforts had been entirely fruitless.

Taking up a long telegram, the chief continued:

"Yesterday Lieutenant Ivanoff, of the navy, who had just completed another investigation of the line, returned to headquarters with a most important collection of charts, reports and recommendations. Last night, while he slept, he was drugged and the papers stolen. According to this latest telegraphic report, there is not the slightest clue in the case, and I have been requested to send assistance.

"With winter coming on, Archangel will soon be frozen in and Murmansk will be our only northern outlet. Therefore, with our Baltic ports effectively blockaded, the loss of the Murman line, or any part of it, will mean that we shall be cut off from communication with Europe and left to the mercy of our external and internal enemies."

As the chief concluded his statement, Zarin sat for some moments dreamily contemplating the blank wall before him. His cold, colorless features were calm and expressionless. The other two men sat back in their chairs and waited for him to speak. Finally he looked at Elmore and said,

"This promises to be an interesting case."

"And one requiring immediate attention," Elmore remarked.

"Then may I wire the chief of counter-espionage at Murmansk that you are on your way?" inquired the chief, adding, "A train leaves this afternoon."

"As far as I am concerned, you may," answered Zarin, and he looked at Elmore, who nodded and replied,

"My grip is packed."

Taking up a pad of paper, Zarin wrote down the following message, which he asked the chief to transmit to the chief of counter-espionage at Murmansk:

Have all incoming passengers carefully examined. Pending my arrival, hold in detention all persons not traveling on official business or unable to produce satisfactory references from at least three reputable local residents.

Reading over the message, the chief remarked:

"Don't you mean *outgoing* passengers rather than *incoming*? Surely you do not expect to find the thief among incoming passengers!"

"Quite right," replied Zarin, with one of his slight, enigmatical smiles. "But I

believe I would prefer to make no change in the message."

Trains on the Murman railway had no particular schedule. Sometimes the trip from Petrograd to Murmansk could be made in four days; sometimes it required two weeks. Zarin and Elmore were lucky enough to make the journey in five days.

Arriving in Murmansk in the late evening they immediately separated, so as not to be seen together. An hour later, Zarin appeared at the home of Commander Pokrovsky, chief of naval counter-espionage for the Murman district.

POKROVSKY was plainly upset. Thus far absolutely nothing had come of his exhaustive investigations.

In the case of the first disappearance, the safe of the office of the naval staff had been opened during the night by the use of the combination; the papers had been removed and the safe locked again. The theft had been discovered the following morning. At least three officers, including the chief of staff himself, could swear that the papers had been locked in the safe the evening before. True, the safe was an old one and might easily have been opened by an expert.

In the case of the second disappearance, Lieutenant Ivanoff, arriving with his reports on a late train, had gone directly to his home and retired. The papers were in a black-leather portfolio, which he had placed beneath his pillow for safekeeping. On the following morning Ivanoff's servant found it difficult to rouse him. It developed that he had been drugged during the night. The portfolio, with the papers, had vanished.

Pokrovsky then gave a full account of his investigation. All persons connected with the staff had been closely questioned; all suspicious characters in the city had been taken into custody and examined; outgoing passengers had been thoroughly searched; telegraphic instructions had been sent to points south; searching parties had gone into neighboring villages. Then there had been the usual search for finger-prints or any other clues.

Finally, in accordance with Zarin's instructions, all incoming passengers had been thoroughly examined, but only three had been detained. Their papers were in Pokrovsky's possession.

Zarin had listened silently with intense

interest to the naval officer's statement. Presently he inquired,

"You say you have detained three persons who were unable to produce satisfactory references?"

"Yes; but I am certain you will find that nothing will come of it," replied Pokrovsky. "I have personally examined them and feel sure that they cannot possibly throw any light upon the case. True, we found upon one of them a sheet of paper which, contrary to travel-regulations, contained a number of figures, but the man gave a perfectly plausible explanation."

At that moment there was a ring of a bell, and both men remained silent while a servant passed through the house and opened the front door. Pokrovsky smiled as he recognized the voice of the visitor.

"That is Markevitch," he said. "He is one of our clerks at the staff—a remarkably efficient fellow and a general favorite among the officers. Since the disappearance of the papers, he has been unrelenting in his efforts to assist us—a most conscientious worker whom I think you will be glad to know."

"Certainly," replied Zarin, adding, in a low voice, "but, of course, you understand that my identity is not to be disclosed here."

THEN there came a knock on the door, and in another instant Pokrovsky had risen and admitted a young man of perhaps twenty, whose genial countenance and sparkling eyes were sufficient answers to Pokrovsky's assertion that he was a general favorite among the officers at the staff.

"Come in and tell us what you have on your mind," said Pokrovsky, as the young clerk entered the room. "This gentleman," he continued, pointing to Zarin, "is here to assist us in our troubles."

"So!" said the bright-faced youth. "From headquarters?"

"Something of an amateur," answered Zarin, smiling genially.

There was just the slightest suggestion of something searching in the quick glance which the clerk returned.

"Well, what have you to report?" asked Pokrovsky.

"I have several suspicions," replied Markevitch, "but nothing definite. And, of course, without something more promising, I would not run the risk of voicing

suspicions. It is so easy to be wrong—and I would much dislike being guilty of making a wrongful accusation, especially in so serious a matter as this. I am following a trail which may lead to something of interest, but until I have followed it further, I would prefer to make no definite report."

"As you like," answered Pokrovsky indulgently.

For some seconds there was silence. Markevitch glanced again at Zarin.

"So you have come to assist us?" he remarked.

"I must say that the thing looks rather discouraging at the moment," Zarin replied.

As Zarin spoke, the genial clerk seemed to be studying his cold, expressionless face.

"Well, we are in need of assistance," Pokrovsky intervened. "We have certainly made a miserable failure of it ourselves."

Again there was silence. Markevitch shifted somewhat nervously in his chair and crossed one leg over the other.

"Well, boy, speak up!" said Pokrovsky. "What brought you here to-night? You may speak with perfect freedom here."

The smile had disappeared from the clerk's face.

"Well, the truth is, Commander," he began, "I have been wanting to speak with you about something, though I would not have come to-night if I had known you were engaged. I have been wondering if it might not be possible for you to give me a place in your department. Of course I am an amateur, but I believe that in time I could make good. At present, for instance, while my whole heart is in this case, I am handicapped by the fact that I have to perform my daily duties at the staff. Now, if I were free to devote all of my time to this work, I have a feeling that I could do something worth while."

"They say that I have a way of getting into the good graces of people. That should be of great help to me. You said something yesterday about having arrested some incoming passengers. Perhaps, for instance, I could help in such a matter as that. You see, I am young, and they might be more unguarded in speaking with me."

Pokrovsky did not reply for a moment.

"I am glad you have spoken of this, and I shall give it my very careful thought," he finally said. "Perhaps I may be able to find a place for you."

The boy's eyes brightened.

"I shall appreciate any consideration you may give me," he said, adding, "and, meanwhile, is there nothing I could do in helping you with your examination of those prisoners?"

"Nothing," replied Pokrovsky. "We have only three under detention, and I am certain they will be released very soon. Each has given a satisfactory account of himself."

If a man can look at once slightly disappointed and slightly relieved, then Markévitch displayed that expression. After a few commonplace remarks he rose to go.

"In any case, Commander, I shall continue to follow certain trails which I think may possibly lead to a clue."

"By all means," replied Pokrovsky. "And good luck to you!"

As Pokrovsky returned to the room, after having let his young visitor out the front door, he observed,

"A very clever boy."

"Very," replied Zarin coldly.

FOR several moments Zarin sat deep in his chair staring blankly before him. Finally, sitting up, he remarked,

"And now, if I may, I should like to see the papers which were taken from the three incoming passengers who are being detained."

"Certainly," answered Pokrovsky, rising and passing into an adjoining room, which served as his office. A moment later he returned and placed three official-looking envelopes in Zarin's hands. Each contained the few papers which had been taken from the passengers, together with typewritten reports of the examinations.

The first two envelopes contained the passports and papers of an elderly man and his son, who, according to their statements, had come to Murmansk hoping to find passage on some outgoing vessel for America, where they had relatives. Zarin looked through a few of their letters written from America and put them aside.

The third envelope contained the passport, a single sheet of paper and a small note-book belonging to one Krikaloff, who, according to his statement, had come to Murmansk to seek employment.

On one side of the sheet of paper were some simple mathematical calculations in

addition and subtraction. It looked as though it might have been torn from some child's school-tablet. On the other side of the sheet was the name of the chief of the military unloading area in Murmansk.

According to Krikaloff's statement, he had come from Petrograd to Murmansk, where he had hoped to find work, for he understood that men were needed in unloading ships. Arriving at Soroka, where the train had been delayed several hours for repairs, he had met an acquaintance on the station platform who had given him the name of the chief of the military unloading area, to whom he should apply for the place he sought. Fearing that he would forget the name, he had looked about for a piece of paper. On the platform he found the paper containing the calculations in addition and subtraction. Seeing that one side was blank, he wrote down the name given him by his acquaintance and placed the paper in his pocket, not realizing that he was thereby violating a travel-regulation.

Krikaloff's passport was in order, and investigation by Pokrovsky had established the truthfulness of his statement that the train had been delayed for several hours at Soroka.

Zarin carefully studied the figures on the sheet. Then, putting it aside, he took up the small note-book. On the first pages there were a few blurred entries showing small amounts which had apparently been spent for various articles of foodstuffs and merchandise. On one of the last pages, however, there was this:

I would speak French.
Because it is a useful language.
I come from afar.
My time is unlimited.

For a while Zarin studied the meaningless, disconnected sentences, which were in Krikaloff's scrawling handwriting. What had prompted him to write them? Surely he would not practise writing on the small page of a note-book. And it was rather unusual for a drifting laborer to be thinking of such things as the study of French.

Putting the note-book aside, Zarin leaned back in his chair and for some time kept perfectly quiet. Then, sitting up, he turned abruptly to Pokrovsky and asked,

"Have you a newspaper here in Murmansk?"

"Yes, one. It is published twice a week."

"Have you a recent copy—preferably the last issue?"

Pokrovsky rose and went into the adjoining room, returning shortly with a copy of the *Severnaya Izvestia*.

Taking the paper and turning to the classified advertisements, Zarin began a minute inspection of each insertion. Finally his eyes rested upon a brief advertisement. A very faint smile spread over his pale features. Looking up at Pokrovsky, he said,

"Now I shall trouble you to telephone the jailer who has been in charge of the detained prisoners and ask him to come here immediately."

"Certainly," answered Pokrovsky, now somewhat bewildered.

AS HE left the room to see to this, Zarin took out his note-book and began copying the simple problems in addition and subtraction just as they appeared on the paper which had been found in Krikaloff's pocket. That completed, he wrote down on another page the strange sentences which appeared in the prisoner's little note-book.

A few minutes later the jailer was ushered in by Pokrovsky.

"Very sorry to have troubled you," said Zarin. "But there are reasons why I wanted to avoid being seen calling upon you at the jail. As Commander Pokrovsky has no doubt told you, I am here to look into the disappearance of certain important papers."

"You may look; but if you can't look any better than we have, you won't find anything," replied the jailer.

Ignoring the observation with a discreet smile, Zarin continued:

"Now, about this man Krikaloff. Has he made any statement or any request whatsoever since he has been in your care?"

"Nothing out of the ordinary," answered the jailer. "We have had several conversations about trivial matters."

"And do you recall whether the prisoner asked at any time for a copy of the local newspaper?" Zarin inquired:

For a moment the jailer hesitated and seemed to be trying to collect his thoughts.

"Now that you mention it, he did," he replied. "In fact, I remember that he asked me twice about newspapers, saying that he was hungry for something to read."

"And you did not comply with his request?" Zarin quickly asked.

"No; because it is strictly against rules to permit military prisoners to receive any sort of reading-matter."

"A very good rule," Zarin observed, "but one which we may be called upon to break in this particular case." And, turning to Pokrovsky, he inquired, "When will the next edition of the *Izvestia* be printed?"

"It will come out to-morrow afternoon."

"Very good," Zarin replied. "Then I shall make this request: To-morrow morning I should like you to arrange for me to see the editor of the paper privately. Later I shall deliver you a copy of to-morrow's edition. That particular copy is to be given to the jailer, who will, in turn, deliver it to Krikaloff. One hour later he will return the prisoner his passport, the sheet of paper and note-book, and then release him."

The jailer and Pokrovsky, although mystified, expressed themselves as entirely willing to carry out the plan, and the jailer took his leave.

"Surely you do not suspect Krikaloff," said Pokrovsky, when the man had gone. "He has certainly given a plausible account of himself."

Zarin, with one of those strange suggestions of a smile, looked at the naval officer.

"I cannot entirely agree with you," he answered. "In the first place, where is the plausible place for a man to write down an important address? There are several blank sheets in Krikaloff's note-book, and yet, according to his statement, when his acquaintance gave him the name of the man to whom he should apply for a job, he looked round the platform and found this rather suspicious sheet of paper. When he was searched, the note-book was found in his vest pocket. It must have been there when he stood on the platform at Soroka. Do you think his action there was entirely plausible?"

There came into Pokrovsky's face something of a sheepish expression.

"Why didn't that occur to me?" was his only comment.

Zarin looked at his watch. He had an appointment to meet Elmore in a broken-down box car near the railway station.

As he rose to go, he took up the copy of the *Severnaya Izvestia* and read again the

rather innocent-looking insertion under the heading, "Professional Cards."

Teacher of French, Spanish and English will take a few additional pupils. Call between ten and twelve, mornings. PROFESSOR LOMOFF, Kanushnaya, 73.

"May I have this?" Zarin inquired.

"Of course," replied Pokrovsky.

BY HALF-PAST ten the following morning Zarin had succeeded in getting a small furnished house on Anglieskaya Street in the outskirts of the town and, as arranged by Pokrovsky, had met the editor of the *Severnaya Izvestia* and explained to him what he wanted.

Elmore, meanwhile, possessing an exact copy of the sheet which had been taken from Krikaloff, was making his way toward Kanushnaya, 73, which he found to be a small log cottage in a remote section of the town.

His ring was answered by a scholarly-looking, clean-shaven man of perhaps forty, who keenly scrutinized his visitor.

"Is this Professor Lomoff's residence?" Elmore inquired.

"I am Professor Lomoff," was the rather stern reply.

Elmore held in his hand the copy of the *Izvestia*.

"I read your advertisement," he said, gazing straight into the professor's eyes.

For an instant the stern figure in the doorway stood immovable. His eyes narrowed very slightly as he regarded his visitor, and there was the faintest compression of his lips. Then, stepping aside, he motioned to Elmore to enter and, without a word, led the way into a small side room fitted up as an office. The professor closed the door tightly behind him.

"Sit down," he said, seating himself before a small table and pointing to a chair opposite him. Elmore obeyed. "What language do you wish to take up?"

"I would speak French," Elmore replied.

A faint gleam seemed to creep into the professor's eyes.

"But why French?"

"Because it is a useful language," Elmore answered without hesitation.

Again there was a pause. Taking a cigarette from an open case upon the table, Professor Lomoff lighted it and settled back in his chair.

"Where do you come from?" he inquired.

"I come from afar," replied Elmore.

Blowing a cloud of smoke toward the ceiling, the professor smiled very slightly.

"How much time have you?" he asked.

"My time is unlimited," was the answer.

Leaning back in his chair, Lomoff seemed to be regarding the curling smoke which rose from his cigarette. For Elmore, this was a critical moment. That he was in the presence of a dangerously clever enemy there could be no doubt. The four sentences written in Krikaloff's note-book were exactly the replies to the professor's questions. Now that the questions had been asked and answered, the time had come for Elmore to depend upon his wits.

Suddenly the professor sat upright and tossed his cigarette into an ash-tray.

"Well," he said, "what have you brought?"

In reply, Elmore reached into his pocket and took out the sheet containing the calculations in addition and subtraction.

The professor took the paper and breathed a sigh of relief.

"This relieves my mind considerably," he said. "I heard that three recent arrivals from the south had been arrested, and was afraid that one of our men might be among them. When did you get here?"

"Last night."

"What are your instructions?"

"I was told to report to you for instructions," Elmore answered.

"And you brought no verbal message?"

"I brought only that," replied the American, pointing to the paper.

"Humph," retorted the professor, again turning his eyes to the figures. "Then wait here until I return."

Taking up the paper, Lomoff left the room. Elmore heard a door down the hall close and a key turn in the lock.

Fifteen minutes later the professor returned.

"There will be nothing further just now," he said. "You will report here to-morrow night, Thursday, at twelve o'clock. Are you a good rifle-shot?"

"Not a bad one," Elmore replied.

"All right. Then come prepared to leave on a hunting-trip. There may be game—human game. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

Without further comment the professor

led his visitor through the hallway and opened the front door. Elmore bowed and passed out into the street.

THE last copy of the *Severnaya Izvestia* to come from the press that afternoon was slightly different from those which had preceded it. The address of Professor Lomoff in the advertisement had been changed from "Kanushnaya, 73" to "Anglieskaya, 9." It was that particular copy which the considerate jailer passed in to Krikaloff's cell just an hour before he was released.

At five o'clock Zarin and Elmore were seated in the front room of the little house at Anglieskaya, 9. There was a knock at the front door, which Zarin himself answered. Elmore stepped into an adjoining room.

Zarin admitted a young man whom he recognized as Krikaloff from the picture he had seen on his passport.

"I am looking for Professor Lomoff," said the visitor.

"This is his house," Zarin replied.

"My name is Krikaloff," the visitor continued. "I saw the professor's advertisement in the paper."

"Come in," said Zarin, ushering the visitor into the front room. "I am Professor Lomoff's assistant. He is away."

Krikaloff looked somewhat disappointed.

"Then I shall not be able to see him?"

"Not at present," answered Zarin, lowering his voice and casting a significant glance at Krikaloff. "But I am authorized to speak for him—on any matter whatsoever. You may speak with me freely. Are you seeking instruction at his hands?"

"Yes," was the answer.

Zarin seated himself beside a table and motioned Krikaloff to a chair.

"You wish to study a language? What language?" he inquired.

"I would speak French," Krikaloff replied, after a moment's hesitation.

Zarin glanced sharply at his visitor.

"Why do you wish to speak French?"

"Because it is a useful language," answered Krikaloff, now somewhat more at ease.

Repeating the action of Professor Lomoff, which Elmore had fully reported, Zarin lighted a cigarette and leaned back in his chair.

"Where do you come from?" he asked.

"I come from afar."

Zarin blew a puff of smoke toward the ceiling.

"How much time have you?" he continued.

"My time is unlimited."

Permitting himself to assume a relieved air, Zarin tossed the cigarette away and asked,

"Well, what have you brought?"

Krikaloff took from his coat pocket the sheet containing the figures, which had been returned to him by the apologetic jailer.

"I am very sorry I have been delayed," he said in a low voice, as he handed the paper to Zarin. "Unfortunately I was arrested three days ago and have just been released. Luckily the paper containing the message was returned to me this afternoon just before my release."

"You were lucky to get away so easily," Zarin remarked.

Krikaloff smiled.

"Yes," he said. "Thanks to the stupidity of these so-called secret-service agents around here. They are a fine lot, eh?"

"Absolutely dumb," Zarin replied—and both men laughed.

Elmore, listening from the adjoining room, barely managed to hold himself in check.

"Well, did you bring any verbal message?" Zarin continued.

Again Krikaloff hesitated.

"I have a message for Professor Lomoff," he answered. "When do you expect him?"

"Professor Lomoff has found it advisable to take a short trip into the country," Zarin replied. "Because of recent occurrences here he is exercising extraordinary care. I shall see him to-morrow and deliver your message."

Apparently satisfied, Krikaloff said:

"First, I would like for him to know that I heard from my group director that the big chief is highly pleased with his work here. But I am told to tell the professor that he should be on the alert, as it is suspected that the Russian demon, Zarin, may come here. It is believed that he was responsible for the disastrous affair at Archangel. It may be that he is already here."

"Quite possible," remarked Zarin.

"They say that he possesses superhuman powers," Krikaloff continued. "I am told that he can look a man in the eye and tell the make of his watch." Zarin smiled.

Krikaloff went on, "My director told me that the big chief was so infuriated over the Archangel affair that he took a solemn oath that he would kill Zarin with his own hands."

A few moments later Zarin rose and from somewhere in his baggage produced a bottle of excellent cognac.

"It is strictly against regulations to drink on duty," he remarked. "But, as you have had such a difficult time of it recently, and as there will be nothing for you to do immediately, I think we may disregard regulations for the moment."

The eyes of Krikaloff grew brighter.

Before two hours had passed, Zarin had substantially increased his already extensive knowledge of the inner workings of the Intelligence Section of the great German general staff.

EARLY next morning one of Pokrovsky's men brought Zarin the following note:

Please come immediately. There have been developments of greatest importance.

POKROVSKY.

After giving Krikaloff strict instructions to remain in his room, Zarin hurriedly made his way to Pokrovsky's house, where he found the naval officer standing in his office amid an excited group of his fellow officers.

"Well, our search for the missing naval papers has come to a most unexpected and tragic end," said Pokrovsky, as Zarin entered. "Markevitch, the young clerk whom you met here two nights ago, has been murdered and we have found all that remains of the stolen papers."

Before the astonished Zarin could ask for any details, Pokrovsky continued:

"Early this morning a workman found Markevitch's body lying a short distance from the railway tracks about a mile below the city. The workman reported the discovery to the chief of the militia, who got in touch with me, and I sent one of my men down to investigate. From his report, not only has Markevitch been killed but the naval papers have been burned. I sent the man back, in company with a guard from the militia, to see that nothing is touched pending our arrival. Come; let us go."

Together with Pokrovsky and his fellow officers, Zarin set off toward the railway tracks. After a few moments of rapid walking they came to the spot where several

men were standing over the dead body of the young staff clerk. It was lying face downward, and an examination disclosed that a shot had passed through his breast.

Some yards ahead, behind a thick growth of bushes, were the remains of a recent fire and the powdered ashes of burned papers.

It was apparent that somebody had beaten the ashes into powder, so that they could not be identified, but a few feet away there had been found a small piece of partially burned paper, which was immediately identified by two of the officers from the staff as the remains of a sheet of the missing plans.

If any further proof were needed to convince the officers that they were viewing the ashes of the stolen papers, it was produced by Pokrovsky himself, who picked up some distance away Lieutenant Ivanoff's black-leather portfolio. It was empty.

The ground being very dry and hard, it was impossible to distinguish footprints. After a further minute search covering a radius of several hundred yards from the scene of the murder, the officers returned with nothing to report.

Zarin, meanwhile, had seated himself on a near-by rock, taking no part in the search and saying nothing.

"Well, gentlemen," said Pokrovsky, after he had given instructions that the body should be removed to the city, "there is no longer any mystery as to the location of the missing papers, but we are now faced with this additional murder mystery. It is perfectly clear to me—in the light of what Markevitch told me—that he was following some clue. In doing so, he undoubtedly met his death. There was somebody in Murmansk whom he suspected and was watching. As I see it, he must have followed the suspect here last night, only to be discovered and killed by him. Whether the murderer was trying to escape with the papers is a question. My opinion is that he was and that, after he had shot Markevitch, he became frightened and decided to destroy the papers."

The views of Pokrovsky were readily accepted by the officers present.

"Poor Markevitch!" he continued, looking down at the body of the murdered clerk. "To think that death has robbed you of the glory that would have been yours. Poor martyr!"

Surely Zarin was the least egotistical of men. And yet there were times in his work when he seemed to delight in staging dramatic situations. It was one of his few sources of amusement.

LEAVING the scene of the murder, he walked back to the city with Pokrovsky, and by the time they had reached the latter's home had outlined certain suggestions, to which Pokrovsky had agreed.

Late that evening, Zarin returned to the commander's home, where Pokrovsky, Lieutenant Ivanoff and a large group of naval officers, including the chief of staff, were assembled. As Zarin had strongly hinted to Pokrovsky that there might be important developments before morning, naturally the guests arrived in a fever of expectancy. While Pokrovsky himself knew the identity of Zarin, the others knew him simply as "a representative from headquarters"—and such persons were not supposed to have names.

Within a few moments after his arrival Zarin had become the center of interest. But if the guests had looked forward to immediate enlightenment, they were to be disappointed, for the cold, pale, expressionless stranger had little to say.

Meanwhile, innumerable new theories concerning the theft of the papers and the murder of Markevitch were being advanced.

Finally, after having listened to the general discussion for some two hours, Zarin decided to prepare the minds of the officers for a jolt.

"In the present case," he began, "there are certain obvious points to be considered. First, from the nature of the papers, it is clear that they must have been taken by some one well aware of their importance. It is equally clear that no person could have known of the existence, nature and location of the papers except one who was intimately connected with the affairs of the staff.

"Of course, you have all been handicapped from the start by the fact that you were too intimately associated with local affairs and persons to judge matters in the same light that a stranger would. It is perfectly natural and perfectly inevitable that a man will unconsciously permit his personal feelings to sway his logic and becloud his judgment.

"In this case, I come here as a stranger,

unhampered by local associations, friendships, enmities or prejudices. Because of your past confidence in the clerk Markevitch, and the fact that he has been a general favorite among you, you naturally take for granted that he died a martyr to his duty.

"I, who am not influenced by such considerations, am equally certain that it was he who stole the papers and that he died a traitor."

There was a general commotion at this.

"The truth is," Zarin continued, amid an almost breathless stillness, "that from the very beginning Markevitch displayed entirely *too much* interest in the affair. It was not natural. He overplayed his game. I saw the boy only once—here in this house two nights ago. Before he left I was convinced, in my own mind, that he was the thief.

"Now let us proceed to the next point. Assuming that Markevitch stole the papers, why did he steal them? Naturally, outside the staff, they could be of value only to the enemy. Therefore, we may say that the boy stole them for some one acting for the enemy.

"Is it possible that this outside person could have come to Murmansk, formed a sudden friendship with Markevitch and persuaded him to do what he did? Hardly. The other person must have been here for a long while.

"Next, supposing that Markevitch stole the papers and delivered them to another, what steps would that person be likely to take? Is it to be supposed that he would immediately leave with the bulky package in his possession, or try to send them out in the possession of somebody else, when he knew that the whole northern district had been roused by their disappearance and that there would be, for a while at least, an unusually strict observation and examination of all persons leaving the city?"

Zarin paused, in order that the officers might have time to reflect upon the points he had presented. Then he went on:

"Now we reach a point concerning German secret methods. Among those of us acquainted with their spy systems, it is known that they have their agents stationed in strategic places. We may take for granted, therefore, that an enemy agent has been here for some time.

"Those agents sometimes travel from place to place, but usually they are

stationed in one place. They simply obtain information and send it on to their chiefs higher up. An agent usually has one or more local operatives in his employ. As he gets his information, he transmits it either by telegraphic or letter code, or by messenger. In the present case, of course, a messenger would be required.

"These messengers, or 'runners,' as they are sometimes called, are sent out from headquarters as needed. Usually they are divided into separate groups, each group being under the direction of a group director. The runners almost always work singly, and are seldom permitted to know the identity of fellow runners. They only know their immediate chief, to whom they report.

"Now, we will say that a runner is sent to a certain city to report to an agent there. He is not given the name or the address of the agent, because the latter sometimes finds it advisable to change both from time to time. How, then, does the runner find the agent? Usually it is done through the medium of newspaper advertisement. Either the runner, upon his arrival, inserts an innocently worded code advertisement in a certain paper, which will be answered by the agent, or the agent himself runs a permanent advertisement, which will be recognized by the runner.

"When the runner succeeds in locating the agent, there is usually a further precaution exercised in the form of a conversational code. In order to guard against possible exposure, these codes are being constantly changed.

"As a still further precaution, messengers are being constantly shifted about from one section of the country to the other. In these days of strict travel-regulations and examinations, the same man could not long travel over the same route without rousing suspicion. A runner, therefore, is seldom sent twice in succession to the same agent."

With this detailed explanation, Zarin then proceeded to state how he had put his knowledge into use in the present case. The strange sentences found in Krikaloff's note-book were obviously answers to be used in a conversational code. When he found in the *Severnaya Izvestia* Professor Lomoff's announcement, he suspected that he was the local agent. Elmore's visit to the professor had confirmed this.

It was several seconds after Zarin con-

cluded his statement before any of the astounded officers could speak.

AT MIDNIGHT Elmore kept his appointment with Professor Lomoff. His ring was answered by the professor himself. As before, he led the American into his little private office, after having securely locked the front door.

Lying on the professor's table were an automatic rifle and a greasy, well-worn hunter's bag, with three pockets—a large one in the rear for game and two smaller ones in front for ammunition—all covered by a large flap fastened by a strap.

When Lomoff and Elmore were seated, the unsuspecting German agent proceeded to outline his lengthy instructions, having Elmore repeat them after him until they were thoroughly memorized. Then, producing a roughly drawn chart, he went carefully over the route which Elmore was to take. First, he was to follow an unfrequented trail which led over the hills to a little Lap village. By fast walking he should reach his destination by daybreak. There he was to apply to a certain Laplander, who provided teams for hunters and travelers. He was then to proceed onward, according to instructions, hiring fresh teams in different villages, until he reached a certain village on the Finnish frontier. There he was to present himself at the home of a certain peasant, where he would make himself known by conversational code, and carry out his instructions.

After the American had thoroughly mastered all these details, he was given a sum of money and told to be on his way.

"Remember," warned the professor, "failure in this case would be disastrous to us. Don't be rash, but if you should find it necessary, use your gun. It is needless for me to tell you the cost of any carelessness on your part. I found it necessary last night to kill a man because he was a fool—and fools are dangerous. If you succeed on this mission, you may expect a proportionate reward. If you fail, you may expect the proportionate penalty. Hear me—I say *the* proportionate penalty."

In another moment Elmore, with the bag strapped over his shoulder and carrying the rifle on his arm, passed out of Professor Lomoff's back door and made his way toward the Lapland hills.

But he did not take the route which the professor had indicated. An hour later he walked into the home of Commander Pokrovsky and was ushered into the midst of the startled guests.

Throwing his bag upon a table in the center of the room and placing his gun beside it, he looked at Zarin.

"Well, my dear Elmore," Zarin said, "you seem to have been out on a hunting-trip."

"Are you ready for my report?" Elmore inquired.

"In one moment," Zarin answered. "Commander Pokrovsky has just asked me a question, which I have not yet answered. Perhaps you may be able to assist me. You have asked, Commander, why the naval plans should have been destroyed, after such elaborate means had been used to get possession of them. Now, let us consider again certain obvious points.

"The person who burned the papers near the spot where Markevitch was killed very carefully beat the ashes into dust. Why did he do that? Naturally so that they might not disclose the identity of the papers which had been burned.

"And yet there was found near the spot a piece of partially burned paper which was identified as a part of one of the missing sheets and, in addition, you found Lieutenant Ivanoff's portfolio.

"Don't you see that, while the person who burned the papers was very careful to leave behind evidence that the burned papers had been the naval plans, at the same time he took particular pains to pulverize the ashes, so that they might not disclose any evidence?

"What is the obvious answer? The naval plans have not been destroyed. But a rather overstaged attempt was made to have us believe that they had been destroyed, to throw us off the trail and off our guard, so that a messenger carrying the genuine papers might be sent out of the city.

"Now, Elmore," Zarin continued, "let us see your game."

Taking a penknife from his pocket, Elmore ripped open the rear section of the game-bag, which the professor had taken particular pains to sew tightly shut.

There were all the missing naval plans. A corner of one unimportant sheet had been

torn off. It was that corner which had been found, partially burned, near the body of the dead Markevitch.

In the early morning, Professor Lomoff was taken quietly into custody. A few moments later, Zarin and Elmore, accompanied by Pokrovsky, entered the house at Kanushnaya, 73, to examine the effects of the German agent.

In the bottom of a small steamer-trunk in the professor's sleeping-room Zarin found the object of his search.

Closely typed on some thirty sheets of thin paper were long lists of words and phrases. Opposite each was a number.

"You see, Elmore, they are a clever lot," Zarin remarked. "Each agent has his own individual code, so in case one of them is captured, it will not affect the use of codes in the hands of the others."

After studying the code for some moments, in connection with the figures which he had copied in his note-book from the sheet of paper found on Krikaloff's person, it was a simple matter for him to decipher:

The bearer is being sent to act as your messenger when you find it safe to send the papers to Finland.

Seating himself at the professor's desk and helping himself to a sheet of paper, Zarin busied himself for the next few minutes in setting down a few simple problems in addition and subtraction. He was enciphering a message in Professor Lomoff's code to be sent by Krikaloff to the "big chief." As he finished his task, he leaned back in his chair and smiled. The message he had prepared was:

To the Big Chief, with the compliments of Zarin.

ON THE train which left for Petrograd that afternoon there were two men who were not molested by the inspectors. One was Krikaloff, and the other was Elmore.

Zarin, meanwhile, sent a wire to headquarters asking that several agents be sent to meet the train upon its arrival in Petrograd, so that the movements of Krikaloff might be carefully watched.

Twenty-four hours later, Zarin himself was seated in a second-class coach bound for Petrograd. There was a peculiar gleam in his black eyes, and a strange smile played upon his colorless face.

The next of Captain Martin's stories of the American secret service in Russia, "Vengeance," will appear in July EVERYBODY'S—out June 15th.

*An Old-Time Stirring Sea Tale—
A Reminder of Jack London*

The Blood-Ship

*Newman, Fresh from a Prison Grave an Enemy Had
Dug for Him, Meets Yankee Swope on the Blood-
Ship, and a Lady—Both Old Acquaintances.
Then Adventure Quickly Begins*

By Norman Springer

Illustrations by Henry Pitz

Begin this story with any instalment. The story is here up to this issue.

HERE was something to cap the climax of all the mysteries I've told you of!

From the first day of my time at the Knitting Swede's in Frisco, Newman, whatever his name might really be, had puzzled me. He'd saved my life when the Swede's runner had tried to knife me after I'd thrashed him fairly. Then, when I'd spent my money to prove I was a man, and was flirting with the mad idea of shipping on the *Golden Bough*, the worst hell-ship on the seas, he had decided me. And why? Because some drunken sailorman had said a word about Yankee Swope's wife, who was no wife, but kept to herself in her own quarters.

I'd been sure that Newman had shipped because of the lady. Then he'd disappeared. All through that first mad day of the voyage he'd lain hidden. But now, at muster, he'd come out—to be recognized by the lady and by Swope himself, who'd looked at him as he might have looked at a ghost and cried out that gasping question: "You! You! Where have you come from?"

I'm getting to be along in years now. I'm in my own ship as I spin you this yarn. John Shreve's seen life—as Briggs here could

tell you. But that's the first time my hair ever stood up—as I waited to see what Newman would do and hear what he would say.

Newman's clothes and face were smutted with the grime from the peak, but his manner was debonair. He answered Captain Swope airily.

"Why, I come just now from your fore-peak—a most unpleasant, filthy hole, Angus! And, less recently, I come from my grave, from that shameful grave of stripes and bars to which your lying words sent me, Angus. I've come to pay you a visit, to sail with you. Why, I'm on your articles! I'm 'A. Newman'—an apt name, a true name—eh, Angus? Come, now; are you not glad to see me?"

It was unprecedented, that occurrence! A foremast hand badgering the captain on his own poop-deck, badgering Yankee Swope of the *Golden Bough*, while his two trusty buckos stood by, inactive and gaping. But, as I explained, there was an air about Newman that said, "Hands off!" It was not so much his huge, muscular body; there was something in the spirit of the man that was respect-compelling—something lethal, a half-hidden, overpowering menace; something that overawed. He was no fo'c's'le

Jack, no commonplace hard case. As he stood there alone, he had the bearing of a man who commanded large ships, who directed great affairs. And his bearing held inactive and overawed those two fighting mates, while he mocked their god, Swope.

And Swope! The man became craven before Newman's upturned gaze. He was palsied with fear—stark fear. I saw the sweat beads glistening on his brow. He lifted a shaking hand and wiped them off. He suddenly turned and strode aft, out of our view, without a parting word to the mates. We heard his footsteps as he walked aft. They were uncertain, like the footsteps of a drunken man. We heard them descend to the cabin and cease.

Newman turned his gaze upon the lady. She stood there, clutching the rail. Her body seemed frozen into the attitude. But her face was alive.

Yes; alive—and not with fear or horror. There was a delight beyond the powers of description shining in her face. There was incredulity, with glad conviction overcoming it. Her eyes glowed. Her heart was in her eyes as she looked at Newman.

He spoke, and his voice was rich and sweet, all its harsh menace gone.

"I have come, Mary," says he.

She did not reply with words. But they looked at each other, those two, and although there were no more words, yet we gained the impression they were communing. Men and mates, we gaped, curious and tongue-tied.

For what seemed a long time the man and the woman stood silent, regarding each other. The dusk, which had been gathering, crept upon us. The lady's face lost its clear outline and became shadowy. Suddenly she turned and flitted aft. We listened to her light footsteps descending to the cabin, as, a short while before, we had listened to the old man's.

When sound of her had ceased, Newman, without being bidden, stepped to the starboard side and fell into line beside me.

The mate finally broke the awkward silence. Lack of the usual sting in his voice showed how the scene had shaken him.

"Carry on, mister!" he said to Lynch. "Finish the mustering."

The second mate read off the list of names. With the single exception of my-

self, not a man responded with the usual "Here, sir." Not a man recognized his name among those called—a circumstance not to be wondered at, for the list was doubtless made up of whatever names happened to pop into the Knitting Swede's mind. But the mates did not care about responses. As soon as Lynch was finished, Fitzgibbon commanded shortly:

"Relieve wheel and lookout. Go below, the watch."

We of the starboard watch went below. Newman came with us, and he walked, as he afterward walked and worked with us, a man apart.

A MAN apart Newman was. We instinctively recognized that fact from the beginning. When we had gained the fo'c's'le, the bitterness of our hearts found expression in bitter cursing of our luck; the Swede, the ship and the officers. But Newman did not curse, nor did we expect him to. We sensed that he was glad he was at sea on the *Golden Bough*, that he was there for some peculiar purpose of his own. He was, of course, the dominant personality in the fo'c's'le—indeed, in the ship. But, strangely enough, we did not look to him for leadership. We regarded him curiously, and with awe and some fear, but we did not look to him to lead the watch. We felt he was not one of us. His business on the ship was not our business; his aims were not our aims. A man apart!

Because of this aloofness of Newman, I suddenly found myself occupying the proud position of cock of the starboard watch. A fo'c's'le must have its leading spirit; the cockship is a position much coveted and eagerly striven for on most ships, decided only after combat between the fighting men of the crew. But the *Golden Bough* had an extraordinary crew. The majority of the men in my watch were just stiffs, who possessed neither the experience nor the desire to contest for leadership. The few seamen, besides myself and Newman, were squareheads, quiet peasants of Scandinavia and Germany, who felt lost and unhappy without somebody always at hand to order them round.

So, within half an hour after going below for that first time, I found myself giving orders to men and being obeyed. They were the first orders I had ever given, and, oh,

they were sweet to my mouth! Think of it! On my last ship I had been ordered about by the fo'c's'le cock; I had gone to the galley at command and fetched the watch's food. Now, scant days after, I, a fledgling able seaman, was lording it over the fo'c's'le of the hottest ship on the high seas, and ordering another man to go after the supper! And he went. I think I grew an inch during that dog-watch; I know my voice gained a mature note it lacked before.

During the supper, and after, I found myself watching and studying my companions. For I feared that my youth might later cause some one to question my cockship, and I meant to fight for it in that event. But my scrutiny satisfied my confidence. There was no man in my watch I could not handle in either a rough-and-tumble or stand-up go, I thought, with the exception of Newman. He would not interfere with me; his interest lay aft, in the cabin, not in the fo'c's'le. In the port watch were two fighting men, my eyes had told me, the cockney and the nigger. If they disputed my will in fo'c's'le affairs, I was still confident I should prove the best man.

This scrutiny I gave my companions was the first chance I had fairly to size them up, and I afterward discovered that my first impressions of them, individually and collectively, were quite correct.

WE WERE, as you know, thirty men before the mast, fifteen to a watch. More than half of the thirty were of that class known to sailors as "stiffs." That is, they were greenhorns masquerading on the articles as able seamen. And such stiffs! The Knitting Swede must have combed the jails and stews and boozing-kens of all San Francisco to assemble that unsavory mob.

In my watch, Newman, myself and four squareheads could be called seamen. But the squareheads knew not a dozen words of English between them. The other nine were stiffs, various kinds of stiffs, broken men all, with the weaknesses of dissolute living stamped upon their inefficient faces.

Except two men. These two were stiffs, all right, and their faces were evil enough, God knows, but they plainly were not to be classed as weaklings. I noticed them particularly that first watch below because they sat apart from the wrangling, cursing gang, and whispered to each other and stared at

Newman, who was lying in his bunk.

They were medium-sized men, as pallid of face as Newman, himself, and their faces gave one the impression of both slyness and force. A grim-looking pair—I should not have cared to run afoul of them on the Barbary Coast after midnight. I already knew the names they called each other—the only names I ever knew them by—"Boston" for the blond fellow with the bridge of his nose flattened, and "Blackie" for the other, a chap as swarthy as a dago, with long, oily black hair and eyes too close together.

Even as I watched this precious pair, they seemed to arrive at some decision in their whispered conversation. Blackie got up from the bench and crossed over to Newman's bunk. The latter was lying with his face to the wall, and Blackie placed his hand upon Newman's shoulder, leaned over and whispered into his ear.

I saw Newman straighten his long body. For an instant he lay tense; then he slowly turned his head and faced the man who leaned over him. On his face was the same expression of deadly menace he had shown the cockney back in the Swede's bar-room.

Blackie could not withstand that deadly gaze. He backed hurriedly away and sat down beside his mate. Then Newman spoke in low, measured tones, and, at the first word, the babel of noise stopped in the fo'c's'le and all hands hung upon his lips with bated breath.

"I play a lone hand," he addressed the pair. "You will keep your mouths shut, and work, and work none of your deviltries in this ship unless I give the word. Otherwise—" The great scar on his forehead was blue and twitching, and his voice was deadly earnest. He did a thing so expressive it made me shudder. He lifted his hand and carelessly placed his big forefinger on the outer side of his bunk, and when he lifted it, two of the myriad cockroaches that infested the fo'c's'le were mashed flat on the board.

Blackie's face set sullenly, and the angry blood darkened his cheeks. Boston wriggled uneasily on his seat and cleared his throat as though about to speak. But, at the instant, Lynch's booming voice came into the fo'c's'le, calling the watch on deck, putting an abrupt end to the scene.

There was an immediate scramble for

the exit to the deck. Oh, the mates had put the fear of the Lord into us all right, and we were all eager to show how willing we were. But I heard Fitzgibbon without, as well as Lynch, and, from the gossip I had heard at the Swede's, I suspected the fo'c's'le was about to be introduced to the orthodox hell-ship manner of turning-to the watch. Both mates would meet us coming up, and the first man out would get a clout for not being sooner, and the last man a boot for being laggard. So I held back, and allowed another the honor of being first through the door.

This honor was seized by none other than Blackie. I suppose he was anxious to escape from Newman's disturbing gaze. Anyhow, at the second mate's first summons, he bounded from the bench and tumbled through the door. I followed immediately after and saw my suspicions confirmed.

Fitz was holding a lantern, and Lynch had his hands free for business. He met Blackie's egress with a careless jab of his fist that upended the unfortunate stiff, and the injunction: "Hearty, now, you swabs! Lay aft!"

I quickly side-stepped out of the second mate's range, in case he should aim a blow at me, and started to obey the command to lay aft. But I had taken only a step when I was arrested by Blackie's action.

Instead of adopting the sensible course of meekness, Blackie rebounded from the deck and flew at Lynch. In the light cast by Fitz's lantern, I saw the gleam of a knife-blade in Blackie's hand. I suppose the anger that Newman's words had raised exploded under Lynch's blow and caused his mad rashness.

But Bully Lynch made nothing of the assault. "Ah, would you?" I heard him say as Blackie closed with him, and then the knife hand went up in the air and the weapon fell upon the deck.

"I'll teach you!" said Lynch, and he began to shower blows upon the man.

Blackie screamed curses and fought back futilely.

Lynch commented in a monotone with each of his thudding blows.

"Take—that—that—that!" Finally he knocked Blackie cold across the fore hatch. Then he turned to the rest of us, who were clustered outside the fo'c's'le door, watching.

"Aft, you swabs, with a jump!"

Aft, with a jump, we went, with the mate's sneering laugh in our ears.

I HAD the second trick at the wheel that watch, from ten o'clock till midnight. I came panting and sweating to the ta-k, keenly relishing the chance of resting. For there was to be no "farming" away the night watches on the *Golden Bough*; the second mate had kept us upon the dead run from one job to another, and I sensed this was the routine of the ship.

It was a fine, clean-smelling night of moon and stars and brisk breeze. The wind had freshened since day, and the vessel was stepping out and showing the paces that made her famous. She had an easy helm—one of those rare craft that may be said to steer themselves. I had time to think and receive impressions as I half lounged at the wheel. The round moon brightened the world. The vast pyramids of canvas above me bellied taut; the cordage wrung a stirring whistle from the breeze; the silver spray cascaded on the weather deck. Aye, she was a ship! I was soon to curse my masters, and the very day I was born, but never, after that night, did I curse the ship. I loved her. I felt the full truth that night of a hoary sea axiom: "Ships are all right. 'Tis the men in them."

I was surprised not to see Captain Swope upon the poop. According to the gossip I had heard at the Knitting Swede's, this eight-to-twelve watch was Yankee Swope's favorite prowling-time. But he did not appear; indeed, he had not shown himself since he had so ignominiously surrendered the deck to Newman. I was not disappointed. I shouldn't have cared if he remained below the entire voyage.

But I did see the lady that watch. When Lynch and his familiars (of whom more anon) had gone forward to a job, she suddenly stepped out of the companion-hatch and flitted aft toward me. Then, when she was close enough to discern my features by the reflection from the binnacle-lights, she stopped. I heard a sort of gasping sigh that meant, I knew, disappointment, and she moved over to the rail and stood staring at the sea.

I thought I knew what was wrong. She had, in the darkness, mistaken my very

respectable bulk for Newman's gigantic body. She had expected to find Newman at the wheel; she was eager for a private word with him.

I watched her, with my head half turned on my shoulder. Aye, but it thrilled me, the sight of her! You will call me a romantic young fool, but it was not that. 'Twas no thrill of desire, no throb of passion for her beauty, though she was fair enough, in all faith, as she stood there in the moonlight. It was something bigger, something deeper—a wave of sympathy and pity that surged through my being, a feeling I never before felt during my savage young life.

Her body seemed so slender and childlike. Too fine and dainty to hold the woe of a hell-ship and, heaven knew, what private sorrow besides. She did not know I was observing her, or else her great trouble caused her to forget my presence, for she suddenly buried her face in her hands and her shoulders began to heave. It stabbed me to the quick—the sight of that noiseless grief. My eyelids smarted, and my throat bulged uncomfortably. What was her trouble? Swope? Had he hurt her? Was the talk I had heard at the Swede's correct—did that black devil beat the lady? My hands grasped the wheel-spokes fiercely, as though I had Swope's sleek throat between my fingers.

I heard Lynch coming aft. I sensed that the lady would not wish him to see her weeping, and since she did not seem to hear the approach, I called softly to her,

"Lady, they come."

She straightened and turned, and, after a second, came swiftly to me. She bent her face within the narrow radius of the binnacle-lights, and her eyes looked straight into mine. Aye; and the misery and suffering I saw in those great eyes!

"God bless you, boy!" she whispered. "You are his friend. Tell him I come for'ard in the morning. Tell him—for my sake—as he loves his life—to look behind him when he walks in the dark."

With that she turned and sped below. And up the poop-ladder tramped Lynch, with the two tradesmen following him.

I HAVE mentioned these two familiars of the second mate before, and I had better explain them.

The *Golden Bough* carried neither junior

officers nor bo'suns—an unusual circumstance considering the size and character of her crews. Instead, she carried two sailmakers and two carpenters, and these tradesmen lived by themselves in the roundhouse, ate aft at a special table, and, save when emergency work prevented, stood watch and watch. They stood their night watches aft, with the officer on deck. This arrangement—unique in all my sea experience—provided three men, awake, armed and handy, throughout the night. It worried us a good deal—this arrangement—when in due time we began to talk of mutiny.

But I was not talking, or even thinking, of mutiny this night. Nothing was further from my thoughts. Mutiny is a serious business, a hanging business, the business of scoundrels or the last resort of desperate men. I knew the consequences of mutiny; so did the others, squareheads and stiffes, and we had not been sufficiently maltreated to make us ripe for such an undertaking.

But there was mutiny in the air on the *Golden Bough* from that very first day of the voyage. I was soon to learn that there was rebellious spirit to spare forward, and shrewd, daring fellows eager to lead, because of piratical greed. Also, she was a hell-ship. It was part of a hell-ship's routine to thump the crew to the raw edge of mutiny and keep them there.

You must understand the *Golden Bough*, and, to understand her, you must understand the knock-down-and-drag-out system in vogue on board a good many American ships in that day and later. A hell-ship, you know, was not just the result of senseless brutality on the part of the officers. She was the product of a system. The captain rode high in his owner's esteem when he could point to the golden results of his stern rule at sea; the bucko mates were specifically hired to haze the crew, and drew extra large pay for the job.

It was, of course, a matter of dollars. If the owners did not have to pay wages to the crew, they would save money, wouldn't they? I suppose some sleek-jowled, comfortable pillar of church and society first thought of it and whispered it into his skipper's ear. And the skipper whispered it to his mates, and they made that ship so hot the crew cleared out at the first port of call, leaving their wages behind. So was the hell-ship born.



But the lady was doing what she could to aid us. She held, every morning.

For instance: We were thirty men before the mast in the *Golden Bough*, signed on for the voyage at twenty-five dollars a month. Of course we didn't get any of this wage until the voyage was completed, until the vessel returned to an American port. Think of the saving to the owners if we deserted in Hongkong! They would have no labor bill, practically, for working the ship from America to China, no labor bill during the months ere she was ready for sea again. Then, when ready to leave Hongkong, Swope would ship a new crew, haze them as we were being hazed, and they would clear out at the next port.

That system worked. It was a money-saver, and lasted till the ascendancy of steam and the tardy passage of laws ended it. Why, some skippers—like Yankee Swope—boasted they *never* paid off a crew.

Of course, not all American ships, or even a majority of them, adopted this system. But enough did to give American ships an evil name among sailors that has endured to the present day.

And this evil name helped sustain the

system. The crew ran away from the hell-ship and spread the evil fame of the vessel over the five oceans. Sailors would not then willingly ship in her, and the skipper found himself putting to sea with a mob of stiff.

Often he had trouble getting stiff. In some ports, where the crimping system was not developed, the hell-ship waited for months for a crew. In other ports, like San Francisco, where the boarding-master's will was the law of sailor-town, the captain paid over his blood-money, and the boarding-master delivered him his crew, drunk, drugged and sandbagged. When he got to sea, he would find his crew composed chiefly of the very scum of the waterside, a mob of unlicked, lawless ruffians, and his bucko mates would need all their prowess to keep them subordinate. Hazing such a mob was the only way to manage them. Also, it made them run away and leave their wages behind.

But there were degrees of "heat" in the hell-ships. The bucko mates usually contented themselves with working the men at top speed, depriving them of their afternoon



a levee in the cabin for the lame and sick, and tended them skilfully.

watches below, and thumping the stiffes because they were lubberly at their work. This treatment was sufficiently severe to produce the desired results. This was normal hell-ship style. The few sailors in the crew, providing they were willing, rarely received more than verbal abuse.

But brutality feeds upon itself. Some officers, after living under the system for a time, became perfect fiends. They came to enjoy beating up men. In some ships, the dressing-down of the crew was a continuous performance, and sailors, as well as stiffes, caught it.

Yet we of the starboard watch were comparatively lucky. Mr. Lynch, our officer, was what I may call a normal bucko. He hazed for the results rather than for the pleasure of hazing, though I think he did get some satisfaction out of thumping the men. You feel a fine thrill when you see a half-dozen huskies cringe away before you with fear in their eyes. I imagine it is the same thrill a wild-animal tamer feels as he faces his beasts. I felt this fascinating sensation many times after I had become

a mate of ships. Lynch had no mercy on the stiffes of our watch; he hammered the rudiments of seamanship into them with astonishing speed. He cuffed a knowledge of English into the squareheads. But he kept his hands off Newman and me, because we knew our work and did it.

The mate was a different type. He was all brute, was Fitzgibbon, and sailors and stiffes alike caught it from him. A natural bully, and, like most such, at heart craven.

Lynch used his bare fists upon the men; Fitz used brass knuckles. I don't think Lynch ever bothered to carry a gun in the daytime. Fitzgibbon never stirred on deck without a deadly bulge in his coat pocket. Lynch stalked among us by night or day, alone and unafraid. After dark, the mate never stirred from the poop unless Sails and Chips were at his heels. Lynch was a bluff, hard man; Fitzgibbon was a cruel, sly beast.

And Swope! Well, I cannot explain or judge his character. It would take a medical man to do that, I think. He was his two mates rolled into one, plus brains. He had fed a certain strong sadistic element in his

nature until inflicting pain upon others had become his chief passion. I can imagine his perverted soul living in former lives—as a familiar of the Inquisition or the red-clad torturer of some medieval prince. But explain him—no. I will tell his ending; you may judge.

But, of course, I was not musing upon the economy of hell-ships or the characters of bucko mates during the balance of that trick at the wheel. The lady's message to Newman possessed my mind.

When I went forward at eight bells, I immediately called Newman aside and delivered her words. He listened in silence, and his face grew soft. He squeezed my hand and whispered somewhat brokenly, "Thank you, Jack"—an exhibition of emotion that startled as much as it pleased me, he being such a stern man.

Then, when I repeated the latter part of the lady's message: "Tell him to look behind him when he walks in the dark," his features hardened again, and I heard him mutter,

"So that is the dog's game!"

"What is?" I asked.

He made no answer, and I turned away toward my bunk. But he reached out a detaining hand.

"You are a big man, Shreve," he said. "Not such a difference in our sizes but that a man might mistake us after dark. Keep your weather-eye lifted, lad; you, too, must look behind when you walk in the dark."

"And what shall I look for?" asked I.

"Death," he said.

CAME morning, but not the lady. And the fo'c's'le was in sad need of her ministrations. Quite half the crew needed salves and bandages for their bruises and cuts, and there was, besides, a more serious case demanding attention.

When the starboard watch was called at four o'clock, we heard a low, insistent moaning in the port fo'c's'le. The man who called us said that the little squarehead—the one whom Swope had manhandled—had again fallen afoul the masters. The hurts Swope had inflicted prevented the boy moving about as quickly as Fitzgibbon desired, so the bucko had laid him out and walked upon him during the mid-watch. When he was through, the lad had crawled on his hands and knees into the fo'c's'le and collapsed.

By eight o'clock in the morning, when the starboard watch went below again, we found the poor chap daft, and babbling, and on fire with fever.

After breakfast Newman and I stepped into the port fo'c's'le. The squareheads of our watch were already there, sitting gloomily about or clumsily attempting to make the injured youth more comfortable.

He looked bad, no mistake. Newman shook his head gravely as we turned away.

"It is a task for her," he said to me. "She has the healing gift. The boy is badly hurt."

A growled curse took my answer from me. It came from one of the squareheads, from Lindquist, a sober, bearded, middle-aged man, the one man among them who could manage a few words of English conversation.

"Koom vrom mine town," he said, indicating the tossing form in the bunk.

His blue eyes had a worried, puzzled expression, and his voice bespoke puzzled wrath. It was evident his slow-moving peasant's mind was grappling with the bloody fact of a hell-ship. It was something new in his experience. He was trying to fathom it. Why were he and his mates thumped when they willingly did their work? What for?

"Nils iss goot boy," he said to us. "Vrom mine town. So hard he vork, *ja*." Then he bent again over the bunk and resumed the application of his old folk-remedy—the placing of wetted woolen socks upon Nils' forehead.

Before the fo'c's'le door we found our mob of stiffs nursing their hurts and watching the cabin, for, as all the world of ships knew, this was the time of day the lady came forward on her errand of mercy.

It was not so much medical attention the stiffs wanted, I think, as it was sympathy. Bruises and lacerations didn't amount to much with that tough crowd. But the lady's sweet, sane being was a rift in the black cloud that hung over the ship. They had all felt the heartening influence of that pure beam at the muster; they craved for it now as a thirsty man craves water. They were men in hell, and through the lady they glimpsed heaven.

And yet not all of us revered the lady. There were men among us, with souls sucked dry by evil, who looked upon her with

profane eyes; she was to them merely a woman, a thing of flesh to be desired. As will appear.

About two bells, not the lady but the Chinese steward, Wong, came out of the cabin and forward.

"Lady no come," he said to us. "All slick men go aft. Lady flix um."

"Is not the lady coming forward?" asked Newman.

"No can do," answered the steward. "Slick man lay aft."

"What is that in your hand?" I demanded, for he bore a glass filled with liquid.

"Dosey," he responded. "Mlissa mate, he say, give um slick man inside." And he pointed to the fo'c's'le.

Newman ripped out a curse.

"A bone-setter, not a dose of physic, is needed in there!" he exclaimed. "Give it here."

He reached out his hand, and Wong obediently surrendered the glass. He surrendered something else as well. I was standing by Newman's side and saw the piece of paper that passed into his hand with the tumbler.

Newman's face remained as impassive as the Chinaman's own. He emptied the nauseous draft upon the deck, gave back the glass, turned on his heel and entered the fo'c's'le. Wong went aft, followed by most of the watch.

I went into the fo'c's'le and found Newman sitting on a bench, musing, with a sheet of note-paper upon his knee. He handed me the note without comment.

It was from the lady, I saw at a glance; a delicate, feminine hand, hastily inscribed.

I am forbidden to go forward. He is drinking. Do not come aft with the sick.

THERE was nothing to say. I looked at Newman inquiringly. He took the note, lighted a match and burned it, watching the paper turn to ash with drawn brows. I knew he was bitterly disappointed; he had, for some reason, counted much upon the lady's visit.

"And did the little dear write? And what did she say?" drawled an unpleasant voice.

I swung about with a start and saw Boston and Blackie, lying in their bunks, one above the other, craftily eying Newman. Boston had spoken.

The dangerous light came into Newman's face.

"What she said is none of your business," he remarked quietly.

There was a moment of uncomfortable silence, broken by Boston, with a wheedling note in his voice.

"Aw, say, big 'un; don't get horstile! We didn't mean to horn in. We just want to be friends. We feel hurt, Blackie an' me, at the way you're giving us the go-by. We're all on the dodge together, ain't we? And we got a rich lay, I tell you! Blackie and me has it all figured out, but we need you to lead, big 'un. What d'ye want to pal with that cub for, when two old friends like Blackie an' me are ready and willing to work for you? We got a rich lay, I tell you!"

"Damn your thieving schemes!" said Newman. "I would sooner chum with two skunks."

"Aw, now, bring the cub in if you like," persisted Boston. "He's a game 'un."

Blackie, the hot-headed, spoke up resentfully. He lifted his battered face on his elbow and lisped through the gap Lynch's fist had made in his teeth.

"Number seven hundred and three wasn't so cursed finicky about his pals the time he jumped the dead-line and ditched the big house."

Newman crossed the fo'c's'le with one catlike bound. He got Blackie by the throat and yanked him from the bunk. Then he shook him as a terrier shakes a rat and threw him into the farther corner.

"There will be no scheme set on foot from this fo'c's'le, save the one I father," he told the pair in his cool, level voice. "I gave you your answer last night. Now, if you two come between me and my goal in this ship, as God lives I'll kill you!"

With that he swung about and stepped into the port fo'c's'le.

"Come on, Shreve," he said to me over his shoulder; "lend a hand. You and I must attend to this boy."

Presently I was standing by Nils' bunk, together with the squareheads, marveling at the gentleness with which Newman's huge hands handled the sufferer. It was an exhibition of practised skill. The feeling was strong in me that moment that Newman had gained this skill in no fo'c's'le, but in a cabin, where as master he had doctored his own sick.

But, after all, he was no surgeon, and there was little he could do for the lad. Newman undressed him—the squareheads had not been able to accomplish this feat, because of the pain their rough handling caused—and bared the poor broken body to view. The squareheads cursed deeply and bitterly at the sight of the shocking bruises on the white flesh. Nils was delirious, staring up at us with brilliant, unseeing eyes and babbling in his own lingo.

"He say, 'Mudder, mudder,'" commented Lindquist's choked voice. "I know his mudder."

Newman explored the hurts with his finger, and his gentle touch brought gasps of agony. His face grew very grave. Then he ripped up a blanket and, with my assistance, skilfully bandaged Nils about the body.

When he was through, he looked Lindquist in the eyes and—shook his head.

"So?" said Lindquist. His eyes, so stupid and dull a while before, were blazing now. Oh, it was evident his law-abiding mind had arrived at a lawless decision; his lowering face boded no good for the brute who had maltreated his young friend.

"*Gott*, if he die!" he said. It was a full-mouthed promise to avenge, that sentence.

As we left, I became aware that Boston and Blackie had followed Newman and me and had witnessed the scene. Said Boston to his mate in a low voice that I just caught,

"If the kid croaks, we'll have the squareheads with us."

CAPTAIN SWOPE did not emerge from the cabin the entire day—or the next day, or the next. But we obtained plain confirmation of the lady's word he was drinking when every morning the China boy brought empty bottles out on deck and heaved them overboard.

But this interim, during which Yankee Swope stayed below and moped and drank, was, you may be sure, no peaceful period for us of the fo'c's'le. The *Golden Bough's* mates could be trusted to hustle the crowd whether or not the skipper's eyes were upon them.

On the third night, at black midnight, Swope came on deck and attempted murder.

Since leaving port, the *Golden Bough* had been standing a southerly course on a port tack. Now, on the third day, the wind hauled round aft and came on us from the

nor'east as a freshening gale. We squared away and went booming down before it, true clipper style. By nightfall it was blowing hard and the kites were doused.

The night came down black as coal-tar, with an overcast sky and lightning playing through the clouds in frequent, blinding flashes. My watch had the deck from eight to twelve, and Lynch—and his satellites, Chips and Sails—kept us hustling fore and aft, sweating sheets and taking a heave at this and that.

Few watches of my life stand out so sharply in my memory. And it was not the near-tragedy that concluded it that so impressed my mind—it was the sailing. For Lynch was cracking on, and there was no faint-hearted skipper interfering with his game. Indeed, had Swope been on deck before the hour when he did come up, I do not think he would have protested. This reckless sailing was what made half the fame of the *Golden Bough*. It was said that Yankee Swope sailed round Cape Stiff with padlocks on his topsail sheets! This night we showed the gale the full spread of her three t'gan's'sls, and the ship tore down the wind like a frightened stag.

Oh, I had seen sailing before. I had been in smart ships, and had run my easting down in southern waters more than once, had made the eastern passage of the Western Ocean with the winter storm on my back the whole distance. But this night was my introduction to the clipper style, where the officers banked fifty per cent. on their seamanship to avert disaster, and fifty per cent. on blind chance that the top hamper would stand the strain. An incautious system? Aye; but cautious men did not sail those ships.

It was so black we had to feel our way about the decks. I could not see the upper canvas, but I could imagine it standing out like curved sheet iron. Every moment I expected to hear the explosion of rent canvas or the rattle of falling gear on the deck. Not I alone thought so, for once, when Chips and Sails were to windward of me, I heard Sails bawl to his companion,

"He'll have the spars about our ears before the hour is out!"

"Not he," responded Chips. "Trust Lynch and his luck!"

True enough. The hour passed, and another, and Lynch still carried on without

mishap. Indeed, the wind had moderated.

Throughout the watch I kept close by Newman's side. That warning—to look behind me in the dark—had by no means escaped my mind. Just what to fear I knew not. When we came on deck, Newman said to me:

"A good night for wicked work, Jack! Keep your eyes open." Small advice on such a night, when a man could not have seen his own mother, stood she two feet distant!

That warning had puzzled me—and I did not dare question Newman concerning it. He was not the kind of man one could question. But what was likely to lurk in the dark? "Death," said he. Did that mean he feared a stealthy assassination, a knife-thrust from the dark? Did he think that Captain Swope was planning the cold-blooded murder of an able seaman?

That was the rub. In one way, it opposed my reason. Of course this was a hell-ship, and murder might very well take place on board. But that the captain should deliberately plot the removal of a fo'c's'le hand! Able seamen were not of such importance in a hell-ship.

YET Newman was more than a foremast hand. God knew who he was, or what his business on the ship, but it was plain he was Swope's enemy and there was a private feud between them. His mere appearance had caused the old man to run below and remain hidden for three days.

And there was the lady. She was Newman's friend. She knew the old man's moods, and she was sure.

The warning was doubtless well founded, I concluded. And Newman was my friend, my chum for the voyage, I hoped. If there were danger for him in the dark, it were well his friend stayed handy by. So, throughout that black watch, I stuck as close as possible to his elbow.

Six bells went when the watch was for'ard at a job. Then suddenly down the wind came a clear, musical hail from aft.

"Ahoy—mister!"

"B'Gwad, the old man's on deck!" ejaculated Lynch to his assistants. Then he bel-
lowed aft,

"Yes, sir?"

"Reef t'gan's'ls, mister!" came the command.

"Eh?" blankly exclaimed Lynch. "Now, what is he up to?" But he yelled back his acknowledgment. "Reef t'gan's'ls, sir!"

When the cringles were up, Newman and I were ordered aloft on the mizzen. The stiffs were useless aloft on such a night, and the fore and main were given the handful of squareheads and the two tradesmen.

When we jumped for the sheer-pole, we passed within a foot of a figure lounging across the rail at the poop-break, and we knew it was Swope—though there had been no word from him since the initial order.

It was so dark we did not see his face. As we swung up into the mizzen-rigging, Newman shouted words in my ear that I knew the wind carried to the captain.

"The devil is abroad, Jack, and there is hell to pay." And when we had gained the yard-arm, he added: "It is coming, Jack. One hand for yourself and one for the ship."

But he did not act on the advice himself—no more did I. Indeed, one needs both arms and a stout back to pass reef-points. We leaned into the work, put our united brawn into it and progressed briskly. All the while I stared beneath me—into the whistling, inky void, trying to discern that spot on the deck below where the braces that held this yard steady were made fast. I felt this lofty perch was no healthy abiding-place for Newman and me. Aye; I had a premonition of what was coming.

Yet, when it did come, I was caught un-
awares. I felt the wood I leaned against draw suddenly away from me. There came a jerk that nigh snapped my neck—my feet left the foot-rope, and I was falling, head foremost, into the blackness. They said I screamed loudly. I was not conscious that I opened my mouth.

It is strange the trick a thing like that can play with one's senses. I seemed to be falling for moments—an immeasurable distance. Actually, the whole thing occurred in about a second's space, and my feet just about cleared the yard-arm before Newman's grip fastened upon my ankle.

My face was buried in the smothering folds of the threshing sail; then Newman had drawn me up till my body balanced upon the yard. A second later my feet were again on the foot-rope, and my hands fastened for dear life to the jack-stay.

I was conscious of using my voice then all right. Aye—but I swore!

"By heaven, he let go the port brace!" I yelled to Newman.

For answer, Newman grabbed me round the waist, just as a fork of lightning zig-zagged through the sky. For the briefest instant the ship stood outlined in a bright light—and far below us, on the deck, we saw Captain Swope standing, looking up at us. Then blackness again. I felt myself for a second time jerked clear of my foothold—immediately to wrap my limbs about a wire rope. For Newman had leaped for a backstay as the yard swung close, and carried me with him.

For a moment we hung there, one above the other, then began to slide to the deck. Lynch's voice came booming up to us, and we saw the light of a lantern bobbing about.

A moment later we clattered off the poop onto the main-deck.

A group was bunched together in the lee of the poop—Captain Swope and Lynch and the tradesmen. Lynch carried the lighted hurricane-lamp that hung handy in a sheltered nook during the watch. Forward, a respectful distance, the stiffs of the watch made a vague blot in the gloom. As we came down the poop-ladder, a voice I recognized as Boston's called to us from this last group,

"He tried to get you, big 'un!" So I knew that the lightning-flash had revealed to the watch what it had revealed to us.

"The brace was slipped," said Newman to Lynch.

"I know," replied the second mate shortly. There was contempt in his voice, and I knew, when I looked at his grim, disdainful face, that he had had no hand in the affair. Bucko Lynch might kill a man in what he considered the line of duty, but snapping men off a yard-arm was not his style. But I also knew that he was an officer of an American ship, and would consider it his duty to back up his captain, no matter what villainy the latter attempted.

Swope smiled sweetly at us. One might think that a man, even a ship's autocrat, when detected in an attempt at cold-blooded murder, would make some specious explanation of his act. Not so Swope. No hypocritical contrition showed in the face the lantern lighted—rather, a cool, pitiless inhumanity that squeezed my bowels even while rage surged within me.

We had understood that Swope was drunk for the past three days—but the smiling features showed no mark of his dissipation. Neither did he exhibit any of the fear he had shown at Newman's sudden appearance the other afternoon. It was plain that Captain Swope had taken heartening counsel with himself regarding the danger he might incur from Newman's presence on board. Whatever was the mysterious feud between the two, Swope had the upper hand. He rested secure in the knowledge of his power as captain, in his knowledge of Newman's helplessness as a mere foremast hand.

And so he smiled, and said musingly and distinctly, to Newman:

"A miss is as good as a mile, eh? But 'tis a long passage."

The cool insolence of it! God's truth, it chilled me, this careless confession of the deed, and threat of what the future held. And then, as though to remove the last possible doubt in our minds that the slipping of the brace was an accident, that the whole job of striking sail was but a pretext to get Newman aloft, Swope turned to the second-mate.

"I think she'll stand it, mister," he said. "You may as well shake out the t'gan's'ls again."

I WENT below after that watch with the thought of mutiny stirring in the back of my mind. But in the back, not the front, remember. For mutiny on a ship is a dreadful business, as I, a sailor, well knew—a neck-stretching business! Yet there the thought was, and it stuck, and pecked ever more insistently at my consciousness as the days passed.

Of course I was wild with rage at Swope's attempt. And I was anxious on Newman's account. You see, I looked upon him as my chum—and had he not saved my life up there on the yard? 'Tis true, there were none of the usual manifestations of fo'c's'le friendship between us. We did not swap tobacco and yarns and oaths. Newman did not permit such intimacy; always he was a man apart, a marked man. But, from the very first, the man's personality dominated me, and after that night on the yard-arm, I felt a passionate loyalty to him. He was not insensible to my friendliness, I knew; he welcomed it and found comfort in it.



I watched Blackie warily, for his affair with the second mate had shown him to be a knife-wielder, and I had no wish to be stabbed. True enough, he jerked out his sheath-knife.

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If he had come to me that night or afterward with a scheme for taking the ship, I should have joined in straightway, no matter how harebrained it might seem. But, of course, he did no such thing. Indeed, he never mentioned the incident to me after we left the deck that night. For all of him, it might never have happened. And, you may be sure, I did not intrude upon his reserve with queries or reminiscence.

Nor did the rest of the watch approach him. Rather did they avoid him as a dangerous person. With that thought of rebellion in my mind, I watched my watchmates that night with more tolerance than my eyes had yet shown them. I wanted to judge what stuff was in them.

The stiffes whispered together and eyed us furtively. I did not like the stuff I saw in them. Rough, lawless, held obedient only by fear—the scum of the beach—I did not like to imagine them sweeping along the decks with restraint cast aside and passions unleashed. The squareheads were a different kind. Good men and sailors, but whose habit of life was submission. Yet I saw they were gravely disturbed by what had taken place on deck. No wonder. I knew their minds. “Who is safe on this ship?” they thought. “Who, now, may go aloft feeling secure he will reach the deck again, alive and unhurt?” Those squareheads had proof of the mate’s temper in the person of their young countryman lying broken in his bunk. Now they had seen proof of the skipper’s temper.

My eyes met those of Boston and Blackie eying me speculatively, and the contact brought my musing to a sharp turn. What did Boston and Blackie think of it? I sensed from their bearing what they thought. For some reason they were pleased. I thought of them as fighting material—and did not relish the thought. Fighters, yes—but foul fighters! I did not like to think of being leagued with them in an enterprise. What was this “rich lay” of which they spoke? What was this game they were willing I should enter? Did they, too, think mutiny?

THESE thoughts plagued me for days, and I found no answer or peace of mind. Hell was preparing on that ship; I felt it in my bones. And we were getting enough hell already, with drive, drive, drive from

dawn to dawn. Yet there were rifts in the clouds.

For one thing, Lynch quieted my mind of the fear that the old man would again get Newman aloft at night and attempt his life with better success. The very next day Lynch came to the foretop, where Newman and I were working on the rigging. He examined the work, and then said abruptly to Newman,

“I had nothing to do with that affair last night.”

“I know you had not,” answered Newman.

“I give you warning—he intends to get you,” continued the second mate. “But he’ll not get you that way in my watch. From now on, you need not go aloft after dark.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Newman.

“You need not,” responded Lynch, rather grimly. “I’m not doing this for your sake. Well—you *sabe*. And make no mistake, my man, as to my position. I am a ship’s officer. Trouble will find me doing my duty by my captain’s side.”

That was his parting. I watched him descend, leap nimbly to the deck and go striding aft, a fine figure of a man.

“By heaven, he’s on the square!” I exclaimed.

“Yes; he’s a straight man,” replied Newman. “She says his heart is clean.”

“She says—” He was in communication with her, then! I had suspected as much. Wong, the steward, delivered her first note, and I noticed that every day Newman made a point of meeting the Chinaman when he came forward to the galley. He was undoubtedly receiving word from her via that go-between.

The lady was, we understood, forbidden by the old man to come forward of the poop. The daily visits to our dogs’ kennel, dispensing cheer and mercy, for which she was famous the world around, were to be denied us—because of Newman’s presence.

But she was doing what she could to aid us. She held, every morning, a levee in the cabin for the lame and sick, all who could drag themselves aft, and tended them skilfully. But this did not help the bedridden ones. It did not help young Nils.

But nothing could have helped Nils. The bucko had done his work too well. Not once did the boy rally; daily his life ebbed.

You must understand the callous indifference of the afterguard to realize its effect upon the fo'c's'le. The boy lay dying for nigh a month, and not once did the captain come forward to look at him. Medicines and opiates were sent forward by the lady, but, though they eased the chap, they were powerless to salvage his wrecked body. Newman said Nils' ribs were sticking into his lungs.

Lindquist went aft to ask permission to move the boy to the cabin, where the lady could nurse him. Swope blackguarded the man, and Fitzgibbon kicked him for'ard again. Lynch ignored the very existence of Nils—the lad was not of his watch, and the whole matter was none of his business. But Fitz came into the port fo'c's'le every day, to make sure Nils could not stand on his feet and turn to; and on deck he would sing out to his watch that Nils' fate was the fate of each man did he not move livelier. "Jump, you rats! I'll put you all in your bunks," he would tell them.

The sight of their young countryman in agony stirred the berserk in the squareheads of the crew. It made them ripe for revolt, drove them to lawless acts, as their shanghaiing and the brutality of the officers could not have done.

These squareheads were no strangers to each other. They were all friends and old shipmates. The Knitting Swede had crimped them all out of a Norwegian bark, plied them with drink, and put them on board the *Golden Bough* after he had promised to find them a high-waged coasting ship.

Young Nils was a sort of mascot in this crowd. He was making his first deep-water voyage under their protection and guidance. Most of them were his townsmen; they had known him from babyhood. As Lindquist said to me, his blue eyes filled with pain and rage: "I know his mudder. When Nils bane so high, I yump him by mine knee." So it was that rage over the pitiful fate of their dear friend fanned into flame a spark of rebellion in the squareheads' disciplined souls, and caused them eventually to leap the barriers of race and caste prejudice and make common cause with the stiffs.

Now, I do not wish to idealize those stiffs. No use saying they were honest working men kidnaped to sea. They were not. They were just what the mates called them—

dogs, scum, vile sweeps of jail and boozing-ken. With the single exception of the shanghaied parson, there was not a decent man in the lot—bums and crooks all.

These men had lived violent, lawless lives ashore. Here, at sea, the mates hammered the fear of the Lord and the law into them. This was well and good. But the mates hammered too hard. They aimed to cow the stiffs, and cow them they did. But the stiffs' fear of the afterguard became so great they were like cornered rats. They came below after a watch on deck with fresh marks upon their faces and bodies, and heard little Nils moaning in his pain. And each man said to himself, "I may be the next to get what the little squarehead got."

Misery loves company; so these stiffs naturally drew close together. Their common hatred and fear of the afterguard fused them into a unit. By the time we were a month at sea, the stiffs, like the squareheads, were in a most dangerous temper and ripe for any deviltry.

THIS common state of mind grew beneath my eyes, but at first I did not see significance in it. A mutinous state of mind is a normal state of mind in a hell-ship's fo'c's'le.

But a mutiny was incubating in that ship. There were men forward who were vitally interested in bringing trouble to a head, in causing an outbreak of violence, in fomenting an uprising of the slaves. One day my eyes were opened to their game.

For weeks I noticed Blackie and Boston circulating among the men during the dog-watches. They were great whisperers, a secretive pair, and they never spoke their minds outright before the crowd. I paid them little attention, for I did not like them and felt no interest in what I thought was their gossip. It never occurred to me they were industriously fanning the spark of revolt, suggesting revenge to the squareheads and tickling the rascally imagination of the stiffs with hints of golden loot.

So far, my rule as cock of the fo'c's'le had been unchallenged. All hands accepted my will in fo'c's'le matters willingly, and I had been careful not to hector. As number-one man, it was my place to see that the men stood their "peggy"—that is, that they took their regular turns getting the food at meal-times and cleaning up the foc'sle

It came Boston's peggy day. He didn't like it a bit. He thought himself too good for such menial tasks, and suggested that Shorty, the smallest and weakest of the stiffs, be made permanent peggy. I vetoed this as unfair, and Boston went about the work, but sullenly.

Next day was Blackie's peggy, as he well knew. When we came below at noon, he made no move to fetch the grub from the galley.

"How about dinner, Blackie?" I demanded.

"Well—how about it?" he replied. "I'm no dashed servant-girl! Get your own grub!"

All hands looked at me expectantly. This was open defiance, and they wanted to see what the cock would do about it. There was only one thing I could do, and I did it gladly.

I took that chesty stiff by the throat and shook him till his teeth rattled. Then I carried him out on deck and stuck his head in the wash-deck tub to cool his ardor, the whole watch following us as interested spectators.

"Well, Blackie, how about dinner?" I asked, when I released my grip.

In answer, he backed quickly away from me, spluttering oaths and salt water. I watched him warily, for his affair with the second mate had shown him to be a knife-wielder, and I had no wish to be stabbed. True enough, he jerked out his sheath-knife.

"Stop that, you fool!" came Boston's voice from behind me. "Do you want to crab the whole game?"

These words had an astonishing effect upon Blackie. His bellicose attitude vanished abruptly; he stopped cursing, and his knife went back into its sheath.

"That dinner, Blackie—" I insisted.

"Sure—I'll get it," he answered submissively.

But I wasn't satisfied with my victory. Of course, I was confident I could have knocked him out as handily as Bucko Lynch himself, but I knew it was not fear of me but obedience to Boston's words that caused Blackie to give in so readily.

Those words bothered me. "Do you want to crab the whole game?" Now, what the deuce did Boston mean? What game were these two worthies up to? Undoubted-

ly it was that "rich lay" they had spoken to Newman about. But what had I to do with it? How could I crab their game? I began to think there was something besides loose talk in these hints of revenge and loot they were dropping.

I guess Boston knew my suspicions must be roused, and thought it time to sound my sentiments. Also, as it turned out, he wanted to pump me regarding Newman. I was Newman's one close friend, and Boston must have thought I knew something of the big man's intentions.

ANYWAY, one evening, after we had picked up the trades, as I was sitting on the fore hatch, whittling away at a model of the *Golden Bough* I was making, Boston came and sat down beside me.

"Should think you'd be so fed up with this hooker you wouldn't want any model of her," he remarked.

"She's a bonny ship," I told him. "'Tis not the ship; 'tis the men in her that's rotten. You'll never see a better craft than the *Golden Bough*, Boston."

"Faugh!" he snorted, and followed with a blistering curse. "Blast your pretty ships! I'd like to see this old hooker go on the rocks—by God, I would! Well, maybe I shall see her finish, eh?"

I glanced at him sidewise and discovered he was likewise regarding me, with the lids drawn over his pale eyes till they were mere slits. I didn't like Boston's eyes. For that matter, I didn't like anything about Boston. But I was interested. There was something behind the words.

"Small chance of you seeing her finish," I said. "As well found a ship as there is afloat—and you may call the old man and his buckos what you will, but they are sailormen."

"I've heard of ships sinking in storms," says he.

"You talk like the stiff you are," I scoffed. "Show me the weather that will drown the *Golden Bough*, with good sailors aft! Besides, Boston, we're not likely to have any bad weather, for which you can say a prayer of thanks, for you stiffs would catch it if we did pick up a decent blow."

"Why not?" he asked.

"It's a fair-weather passage," I explained. "These trades will blow us clean across a hundred and eighty into the sou'west

monsoon, and with luck that'll carry us into the China Sea. Of course, there is always the chance of meeting a hurricane this side, or a typhoon on the other side. You'll squeal if we do, I bet!"

"Hah!" says he. "Well, now, how about running on a rock? We'll be going among islands, eh? These South Sea Islands?"

"Forget it," I replied. "We'll not sight the beach this side of the Orient, unless the old man makes a landfall of Guam. We are running along sixteen north, and that takes us south of the Sandwich group and north of the Marshalls and Carolines."

"Well, now, I guess the big 'un has been showing you his map, eh?"

"What's that to you?" I said shortly.

"Nothing—nothing at all," he answered hurriedly.

In truth, I was surprised and nettled. I hadn't got the point of Boston's questions, and I hadn't supposed he was watching Newman and me so sharply.

FOR Boston was right. I had been looking at the big 'un's map. Newman had a fine large-scale chart of the Pacific in his bag, and this he brought out every day and traced upon it the progress of the voyage. He got the ship's position either by word from the steward or from the lady's notes.

I had been privileged to see the chart, but I knew that none other had ventured to approach when it was spread out on Newman's bunk. Newman had traced the ship's probable course clear to Hongkong for my benefit, and explained to me the problems of the passage. He did not speak like a man merely guessing, but with authority, like a man who had sailed his own ship over this course. I absorbed the information greedily, but did not venture to inquire how he was so positive about Yankee Swope's sailing-plans. Somehow, I knew he was correct.

It pricked my conceit to discover that Boston was aware Newman had fathered the information that was falling from my lips.

"Say; how long before we reach Hongkong?" went on Boston.

"You had better ask Newman himself," I retorted.

"Now, don't get mad, Jack," he said humbly. "You know I didn't mean nothing. Guess you *sabe* as much about sailing as the big 'un, anyway."

"Well, this is a fast ship—none faster," I told him, mollified by his flattery. "Say sixty-five days, at the outside, from Frisco to Hongkong. Probably fifty-five days would be nearer to it."

At that he burst out cursing, and consigned the ship and all her afterguard to the evil one.

"My God—another month of this hell!" he cried. "Will you stand it, Shreve?"

"Sure. We'll all stand it. What else to do?" I replied.

"What else?" said he. His voice was suddenly crafty. "Well, now, Shreve, didn't it ever strike you as how we're blasted fools to let those fellows aft knock us about? There are thirty of us, and two of them."

"More than that," I warned him. "You forget Captain Swope and the tradesmen. There are seven of them aft, all armed and of a fighting breed. You are hinting at a silly business, Boston."

"Oh, I don't know," he persisted. "Thirty to seven ain't so bad. And they haven't all the arms. We got our knives, ain't we? And maybe other things, too."

"Forget it," said I. "Don't imagine for a minute these stiffs will face guns. You and your mate might, but as for the rest of the gang—why, Lynch could clean them up single-handed. Better stow that kind of talk. It's dangerous. You have the law against you, and it's a neck-stretching affair."

"The law?" he echoed. "What do you think that gang cares for the law? Mighty few laws they ain't broke in their time! And they may be stiffs, right enough, but they'll fight—for money!"

"Dare say," I remarked sarcastically. "And I suppose you'll hire them with your bags of gold, which you probably have stowed under your bunk?"

"Well, now, maybe I'd just have to promise them something," he said. He glanced round, then leaned toward me and lowered his voice to a whisper. "Shreve, there is money on board, a hundred thousand dollars hard cash aft there!"

"What's that?" I exclaimed.

"Yes," he said. "I know. You bet I know! Blackie and me knew before ever we come on board this cursed hooker. The Swede didn't shanghai us, you bet!"

"Oh, stow that sort of guff, Boston," I told him. "Maybe the Swede didn't

shanghai you; but if he didn't, it was because you and your mate were willing to ship with the devil himself in order to get out of the country."

My words touched his temper,

"You seem to know a lot more than I know myself," he sneered. Before I could answer, he regained control of his temper and continued, with oily suavity: "I guess the big 'un has been talking to you, hasn't he? I guess maybe he's told you that Blackie and me are two men who can take a chance without weakening. Say, Jack; what has the big 'un been saying to you about us? I want particular to know."

"He hasn't said a blessed word about you," I answered truthfully.

Boston cursed, and favored me with an evil squint; then he hid the look behind a forced laugh.

"Well, if you don't want to tell me, I guess you don't have to," he remarked. "It don't hurt me and Blackie none, whatever the big 'un says. And say, Jack, you and us ought to be good friends. Blackie and me know that you're a good man—the kind that'll take a chance and keep his word. Well, we're the same. There are only a few of us in this end of the ship that have any backbone to speak of, and we ought to stick together. There's pay-dirt in this cursed ship if we only play the game right."

"What do you mean?" I wanted to know.

But Boston concluded he had said almost enough for once. He rapped his pipe against the hatch combing to dislodge the dottle, and got to his feet. I thought he was going to leave me without replying to my query, but after he had taken a step or two, he spoke over his shoulder, softly:

"That's true what I said about the money, Jack. It's there, just waiting for a few lads of nerve to come and take it."

"If that talk gets aft, the old man will have you thumped into a jelly, just as an example to the other stiffes," I warned him.

He gave the devil's cackle that passed with him for a laugh, and, stepping close to my side, spoke directly into my ear.

"Who is going to take the talk aft? Not you. Blackie and me know that Jack Shreve ain't a snitch. Nor the big 'un. You can tell him what I said if you like. You can tell him something more. Blackie and me think there is a snitch in this gang, and the big 'un had better keep his eyes peeled for

a double cross. You tell him that. You tell him to ask Nigger about it."

"What do you mean?" I cried.

His answer was a mysterious shake of the head, and he disappeared into the fo'c's'le.

IF BOSTON meant to give me something to think about, he succeeded. He left me worried. Not about the treasure or mutiny at which he hinted; for the time being I put this subject out of my mind. I was concerned over his unexplained warning. Did some new danger threaten my friend?

I went in search of Newman to give him the warning. He was not in his bunk, so I stepped into the port fo'c's'le, expecting to find him by Nils' side. Nils was dying—we had been expecting him to go at almost any hour for a week past—and Newman had been spending a goodly share of his watches below by the lad's side.

But he was not there now. The parson and some of the squareheads of the port watch were keeping sick-vigil. Nils was very near the time when he must slip his cable; he lay quiet, eyes closed, hardly breathing, and his thin white face seemed already composed into its death-mold. Holy Joe sat holding the boy's hand; his head was bowed, and I judged he was praying. The others stared miserably at the floor or ceiling or at each other. Aye; the taste of bitter sorrow was in the air of the port fo'c's'le. I left without disturbing the silent watchers, but I wondered at their boldness. They should have been on deck. Fitzgibbon did not give his men respite, even during the dog-watches.

I went poking about the odd corners of the fore deck, expecting to find my man tucked away somewhere, smoking and meditating, for Newman was a solitary fellow, very fond of his own company in his free time. I laid the ill success of my search to the dusk; it was past seven bells, and, although there was still a glow in the western sky, on board ship it was quite dark and the side lights had been out a half-hour. Finally, I decided to lay aft, waylay the nigger when he came for'ard from his trick at the wheel, and ask him myself what was the meaning of Boston's talk of "snitch."

Now, it was no light undertaking for a foremast hand to trespass abaft the mainmast in the *Golden Bough*. There was risk in it—risk of a beating, or worse.

So I slipped aft without making a noise and avoided attracting to myself unwelcome attention from the poop. I was barefoot, and I crept along the rail, keeping within the shadows on the lee deck. When I came abreast the roundhouse, I darted into the black shadow it threw upon the lee deck and crouched there, composed to wait. My eyes were aft, upon the break of the poop, and I was ready to take instant flight for'ard did discovery threaten me.

AFTER I had lain there a moment, I noticed the figure of a man standing motionless, flattened against the cabin wall on my side of the deck. He was so still he appeared to be lifeless—a part of the ship. I looked hard before I decided it was a man. It was too dark to make out his features, almost too dark to discern outline, but by the bigness of the blot he made against his background, I was sure the man was Newman. What he was doing in such a position I could not guess, but I was so sure of my man I did not hesitate to move toward him. I even spoke his name in an urgent whisper.

My hail brought a prompt response, but not the one for which I was looking. To my surprise, the fellow ran away from me; he slipped across the deck, padding noiselessly, for he was barefoot, like myself, and, bending nearly double, scurried for'ard beside the weather rail.

I stared after him, undecided what to do. The man looked like Newman, but did not act like him. I had half a mind to pursue the flitting figure. Then all at once I found I must take cover myself. The mate's voice came to my ears from the poop. He was hailing the tradesmen and bidding them accompany him for'ard.

"We'll give the bums a sweat at the braces," says he, "so they won't think I'm asleep."

I had moved out of the shadow, and, as I stood, was revealed to any eye looking over the poop rail. If braces were to be tightened, the roundhouse would be a poor concealment. I had no time to make a safe escape for'ard; so I darted aft and flattened myself against the cabin wall, in exactly the same position as that occupied by the fellow

I had just scared away. I was not a second too soon, for Fitzgibbon came clumping down the port ladder, almost within arm's reach of me, and went forward, bawling for the watch, with Chips and Sails at his heels.

The wall I hugged was the for'ard wall of the sail-locker—which in that ship was a room in the cabin-space—and as I stood there, my ear was but a few inches distant from the sail-locker door. This door was in two parts, and the upper half was ajar and through the slit came the sound of voices. Two people were in the sail-locker, talking. Oh, aye; I had discovered Newman. I recognized his voice, and the other voice as well—the lady's voice.

Newman was speaking, and in a voice so tender, so vibrant with feeling it was hard to believe the words came out of the mouth of the fo'c's'le's iron man.

"I came to kill," he said, "but now—oh, you have softened me, unmanned me! The bitterness has left my heart."

"Two wrongs would not make a right," said she. "He is all that you say; his lies have ruined your life, and my life. But, oh, Roy, you must not stain your hands with his blood! You have promised."

"I have promised," was the response. "I give up my revenge—gladly. But I shall protect you. He is a mad beast; he must know I will not leave you in his hands. Remember, you, too, have promised—to call upon me in danger."

This much I heard as I stood silent, waiting until the sound of the mate's voice came from well for'ard and the road of retreat seemed free from hostile eyes. Then, since I had come to warn, not to eavesdrop, I placed my mouth to the opening in the sail-locker door and called out softly:

"Newman! Come! You are spied upon!"

I heard the lady gasp, and knew my message was received and understood. I waited for no further response, but scuttled away from that perilous spot as fast as caution permitted my legs to travel. Jack Shreve was no Newman, to flout ship's rules with impunity. And there was reason for my haste, for there was a sudden uproar for'ard that bade fair to rouse the ship.

What is the strange relation between Newman and the lady of the *Golden Bough*? The thrilling story of this voyage is continued in July EVERYBODY'S—out June 15th.

The Snake-charmer *of Kairwan*

*To Be Branded with the Evil Eye Is Still, in Some
Parts of the Globe, Worse Than the Plague—So
Randall Found. But Even in the Orient Occi-
dental Wit Sometimes Wins*

By Charles Divine

Illustration by Herman Pfeifer

LARBI'S bazaar in the Arab quarter of Algiers hung over the street of steps like a multicolored lantern. Within hovered a dim quietude, sweetened by the burning of Sumatra gum and a nightingale's song in this jeweled recess where Larbi had come back to pass the remainder of his days at the gateway to the Orient, after untold journeys with his prayer-rugs and perfumes from Kairwan to Stamboul, the Cannebière to Fifth Avenue.

Leaning back against the tapestried wall, he listened, enthralled, to the bird singing in the rusty cage above his turbaned head, and when he opened his dusk-fringed eyes again, he fumbled among the jewelry on the counter till his brown hand found a brass pestle with which he beat on the window-sill, to attract a waiter from the near-by coffee-house. He held up the pestle in warning, with a strange gleam in his eyes.

"See, *sidi*? It is fashioned in the shape of a serpent." His voice fell hushed and low. "Beware of the horned viper. It crawls into the sand and lies buried, with only its mouth and nostrils protruding." A shiver shook the burnoose-clad shoulders. "It is a deadly thing, as one of your compatriots

would tell you—if he were here to speak." And Larbi had begun his story.

Tump-e-dee, tump-ump! Tump-e-dee, tump-ump! Tom-toms were beating in the Place de Tunis, summoning the populace outside Kairwan's western gate at the second hour before sundown, in a sandy square bordered with low bazaars and *fondouks*, littered with random tents of pottery-sellers and meat-mongers. The plaza was teeming with traffic of man and beast—Bedouins departing with camels and donkeys laden with provisions, their wives trudging after, with babies slung perilously in cloth hammocks across their backs, rags on weary limbs, astounding jewels on tattered blouses. Bazaar-keepers were putting up their shutters for the day. A grimy *restaurateur* still functioned at the gabled end of a squat tent, a burlap sun-shelter, where diners sat on their haunches while the proprietor cooked them greasy mutton on a spit in a buzz of flies.

Tump-e-dee, tump-ump! The booming of the taut goatskin drums vibrated beneath the city's crenelated walls, insistent, sinister, like thunder ill at ease, with an impatient rhythm that rumbled far, now and then

compelling a Bedouin to stop, arrested by the clamor, drawn irresistibly to the center of the *place* where Bali ben Ali, the lean, tawny-hued snake-charmer, was pacing up and down with his burnoose fluttering in front of his seated musicians.

A flute added its shrill wail to the tambours' tump-umping as two men in European dress approached the group of natives slowly gathering round the snake-charmer. The Arabs stirred with wonderment. Their inscrutable eyes which gaze at nothing and see everything observed the *Rumis*—Christians—and their voices began to utter surprise in their beards.

B'ism illah! It was strange to behold the *Rumi* without the *Rumia*—the tall, sun-burned American without the girl in whose presence he always walked at evening, the girl who, accompanied by her wealthy aunt, an irritable bundle of nerves and sight-seeing restlessness, had come to spend the winter in Tunis at Sidi Randall's suggestion, that she might see the land where his work as an engineer-architect called him and where, if Allah's blessing fell upon him, she might remain to dwell as his wife.

BUT now, instead of striding stalwartly at Miss Wesley's side, talking, enraptured, he came alone with Monsieur Denoter, the *contrôleur civil*, a man big of bulk and breast, bearded and spectacled.

At once the snake-charmer caught sight of Randall. He stepped forward, bare of foot, his brown camel's-hair burnoose hanging loosely from one shoulder, to which his long black hair fell from beneath his turban, his eyes, deep-set, now suddenly agleam.

"*Salam halik!*" he cried, hand raised in friendly greeting.

Again the Arabs muttered surprise. A strange *camaraderie*, that of the immaculate American and the uncouth Bali ben Ali. They were frequently together, the snake-charmer spending many morning hours watching Randall oversee his gold-skinned laborers, and the architect, in turn, finding much that was picturesque in the bizarre character of the other, who was an important member of the community, regarded by many with awe. His association with Randall did much to insure the latter's acceptance among fanatic Moslems who grumbled at first when the unbeliever came to rebuild their falling mosque. Randall had been

warned of the trials that might beset him among a people ignorant and superstitious, who could evince hatred in ways singular and baffling. Yet he had made immediate progress, for his air of reverent competence had apparently won the natives' trust—and Bali ben Ali valued his company.

The snake-charmer retreated to the farther edge of the circle and plunged into a heap of black-leather bags, aided by the green-turbaned Musa, his assistant, arranging the mysterious parcels. Turning, he advanced to the other side and cried out to his musicians, causing the flute-player to pipe higher, swaying in a spell of self-forgetfulness and lash-lulled eyes, and the tom-tom beaters to thump louder; whereupon he flung up his arms and began to speak, bidding his listeners toss money at his feet, since snake-charming was not only his pleasure but his livelihood.

Bali ben Ali waxed vehement. He pointed invitingly toward the snake-bags back of him, from which he swore to extract his reptiles as soon as sufficient funds had been contributed for the glory of Allah.

"The coppers are not for myself!" he cried. "*La, la!*" (No, no!)

He made that clear in many tones and gestures, rolling his sleeves to the elbow for freer movement. He ran to and fro, dancing up and down, crawling grotesquely on his knees till the sweat ran down his brow under his turban. He proclaimed that all donations were for Allah, and all donors would be granted eternal blessings and immunity from sickness. Coins fell tinkling into the circle.

"How hard he works at his *métier!*" exclaimed Denoter, at Randall's side. "It is phenomenal—for an Arab." The French governor was well informed on native habits, from which wisdom he had lent the American much assistance.

Randall nodded eagerly.

"It is an interesting study in energetics."

He saw the oratorical Bali lean forward, so intense in his soliciting of sous that saliva welled to his lips. He darted to the snake-bags, making as if to draw out a serpent by its tail. Then he hesitated, with a cry of fear, the artful gesture of a charlatan, and gave up the attempt, shouting that the danger involved was immeasurably greater than the amount of money thus far contributed.

After several repetitions of this commercial strategy, he threw himself on the ground, exhausted by his own eloquence, yielding place to his assistant, Musa of the green turban, who took up the work with fresh energy. But Musa was less of a towering actor than Bali, and Randall took advantage of the intermission to gaze round the crowd, now grown to a couple of hundred, augmented by tourists and their guides. Of a sudden, he started at the sight of newcomers opposite, and again Arab voices uttered surprise.

There was the young *Rumia* and the other elderly one, but—in the name of Allah!—they were avoiding Sidi Randall. It was Ahmed ben Omar who accompanied them. Randall was seen to wince.

THE scene at the grand mosque that morning, where visitors were permitted to enter, had been fraught with significance. He had pounded impatiently at the ponderous iron-studded door, and somber echoes rolled away, resounding far inside, while behind him in the street lay only dust and sunlit silence as he seemingly knocked at a deserted temple from which all the world had fled in dread. When, at length, lackadaisical sandals rustled and the door swung back before the blinking guardian, he brushed past him and strode across the patio. Sidi Randall had been in a hurry, quickly mounting the stone stairway of the minaret till, at the top, he found the object of his search leaning gracefully against the parapet, her blue eyes gazing dreamily down upon the multitudinous roofs.

Before she could recover from a shock of surprise at his brusque appearance, he had begun speaking, each word impetuous and resolute, causing the color to rise in her cheeks. Virginia Wesley was not accustomed to having a man forbid her anything, and Randall found his even gaze returned with fiery challenge and lifted chin.

"It is a folly I will not permit," he insisted, and his usually good-natured face was grave—a lovers' quarrel, as vehement as lovers' love. One would say that our African sun had acclimatized them to its passions—in a duel of two strong wills in conflict over a caravan journey proposed by Ahmed ben Omar.

She turned from him rebelliously, and her eyes again swept the city below, Kairwan,

renowned throughout Tunis, *la ville sainte*, whither faithful Mohammedans made pilgrimages from all parts of north Africa—a snow-white crystal city in the morning light, its whitewashed roofs and domes glistening as with a frost-sheen, ivory and pearl and alabaster, a sister city of the moon, yet fairer and whiter, even as the girl who looked at it so fascinated was fairer and whiter than a slice of the moon when it is pearl-new. Her gaze wandered beyond the outlying Mosque of the Barber to hazy, glamorous distances and noiseless tracks where camels moved like a languid line of drugged ants. Of a sudden, his arm shot out toward the horizon.

"There is no desert there," he said, and she started as if her thoughts had been read. "Only the same flat, monotonous plain, the half-desert, as unintriguing fifty miles from here as it is within sight. When Ahmed said he would take you and your aunt to the Sahara in a day, he lied. Once in the wastes beyond Kairwan, it would be easy for him to rob you of all you have, and then flee to the desert himself, leaving you alone and unprotected. Such things have happened—and worse!"

She flung up her head proudly.

"He was recommended to us by an English lord we met at the hotel in Algiers."

He nodded grimly.

"A titled but undiscerning traveler who had found his services useful without discovering his duplicities."

Two years with the biggest engineering company on the coast had given him an insight into the native mind, as well as bringing him this difficult task in Kairwan which, if successful, would establish him as an authority on colonial structures and Arab architecture; and a month in the city had taught him something of Ahmed ben Omar, the handsome, majestic Arab who haunted the local hotel and was always in demand among tourists. Something adventurous in Miss Wesley's heart prompted her to defend her project. Ahmed ben Omar was the son of a caliph—who, interjected Randall, had been imprisoned at Tugurt for inciting the Arabs to revolt during the war. He was intelligent and cultured—scratch the surface, returned Randall, and the savage glinted through the polish.

Miss Wesley was in a fury. Did he think

she and Aunt Emma were to be treated like native women, jalousied phantoms, to be shut up in a hotel all day while he toiled at the mosque? It was not for this that she had come to our Mediterranean littoral, to this enchanting realm of dream-draped Arabs and Roman ruins, of velvet-footed caravans and paradisaical oases, of purple sunsets and Arabian Nights. And Sidi Randall still recalled how she had left him in angry dismissal.

Looking across the snake-charmer's audience, he saw Ahmed making a passage through the press of Arabs. His head was bound with white turban-cloth, which fell to the shoulders of his rich burnoose and framed a face well featured—a strong, straight nose, a black mustache that partly hid his mouth but could not conceal the full, almost sensual lower lip; heavy eyebrows so hirsute that the hair joined together over the bridge of the nose, lending shadows to the eyes. He jostled the natives arrogantly to make way for Mademoiselle Wesley and Madame Carey, though there was little need for such rudeness, since the Arabs worshiped the younger woman. She gave alms to the poor, and for an urchin run down by the hotel omnibus she had bought medicines and a doctor's services.

The Arabs looked at her and murmured tributes in their throats, "The white angel!" Ahmed put his shoulder against them conspicuously to make more room for her aunt, for whose comfort he was ever vigilant, a trait which caused her to esteem him highly. He had often conducted them to my Kairwan bazaar, and, drawing me aside, told me of the fortune he would heap upon my counters from his clients' purses if I would be liberal with bakshish, advising me to put my first price higher than usual that he might seem to beat it down with a show of great fidelity to *madame's* interests.

From his station in the first row of spectators, his dark-browed glance traveled across to Randall with a bow, but his unfathomable mien betrayed no sign of comprehension that there was anything unwonted in the situation—only a disinterested curiosity, a studied inscrutability.

THE din of the tom-toms' quickened cadence recalled Randall to the movements in front of him, where Bali ben Ali had risen to resume the center of the stage. Open-

ing one of the leather bags, he drew out a black snake by its sinuous tail and loosed it at his feet, whence it slithered across the sand, a cobra six feet long, stopping to lift its head a foot from the ground, swelling its neck till the hooded head was distended in the air, in that fearsome attitude it assumes when seeking prey, on the alert, eyes glaring, preparing to strike. It remained in this position with an air of curiosity, turning its head to follow Bali's movements as he danced round it, and ever and anon approached in his capering, to make it strike at him, whereupon he leaped back with feigned alarm, and the crowd cried out in dread.

"These Arabs!" laughed Denoter. "They think its sting is deadly, unaware that the fangs have long since been removed, at the time of its capture."

Randall observed that this elimination of danger in no wise lessened the awe of the native spectators, who marveled at the exhibition in vicarious fear with many deep-throated murmurs, some of which proceeded from an Arab who had elbowed his way close to Randall's side. He was clad in a slovenly burnoose, all rags, and tattered sandals; a shaggy beard enveloped the yellow face and wrinkled eyes.

"It is Moulay Malah," whispered Denoter. "He is a Marabout."

Randall had seen the holy man loitering about the mosque where he worked. He knew that some achieved this pinnacle of priesthood through study of the Koran, others through pretense and idiocy, since among the Mussulmans a lunatic was regarded as a saint and treated respectfully. Moulay Malah had chosen to be a Marabout because it was an easy means of existence—begging money in the name of Allah—and he had found it by no means difficult to be accepted as one, since he was the descendant of that other Marabout who had prophesied that one day the French soldiers would enter Kairwan.

Randall's gaze went back to the snake-charmer, who was not satisfied with the amount of money contributed, upon which topic he took the cobra into his confidence, calling it playfully by name.

"Wait, Sidi Benevolence! Be not impatient; I will bring your wife out soon."

This colossal pleasantry caused the Arabs to laugh and fling more coins, while Bali

drew forth a second cobra. Then, from a third and fourth bag he produced two smaller snakes, which he displayed dangling from his hands as he walked round the circle, passing the spot where Ahmed stood.

Miss Wesley leaned forward beside her guide, gazing wide-eyed at these slim snakes, light-brown in hue, handsomely marked with pale spots. There was a large horny spike above each eye which distinguished them as the poisonous horned vipers. The sight of them filled her with loathing, as did all snakes—sickening, repulsive things!

She shuddered; yet there was a fascination in the scene, an uneasy horror which attracted at the same time that it repelled. Her aunt let out a groan of protest.

Bali stood still, at his feet the cobras and in his hands the horned vipers, which he called affectionately by the French names: "Tranquillité" and "Mystère." His body began to sway from side to side, in synchronal rhythm with the thundering tom-toms and the melancholy flute, a monotonous repetition that fascinated the snakes, delighting in the music as by hypnosis, till the cobras, too, swayed their swollen heads with the cadenced tune and the vipers stiffened like rods.

"Ah, this *charmeur de serpents*!" exclaimed Denoter admiringly. "He knows his technique."

The next moment Bali put down the vipers and called for more room. At no time had the Arabs betrayed a desire to congregate too near the leather bags or their contents, now coiled on the ground, and yet Bali was not content. Waving his arms, he cried for a wider circle. Shaking his disheveled locks, he flew into a rage.

He dived into another bag and clutched a handful of small squirming snakes, a nest of quivering terror, with which he ran into the crowd, hurling his accursed parcel at the heads of the nearest natives.

They struck Ahmed ben Omar full in the face. He fell back, livid, and for the first time Randall saw him lose his unfathomable composure, while round him the Arabs fled, crying hoarsely. The white angel and her aunt were dumfounded, and other tourists on that side of the circle showed a disposition to retire.

All came back, however, attracted by the charmer's strange methods, while Ahmed

glared at him darkly from under his hairy brows. The *Rumia's* aunt groaned again.

"And this is the man with whom Randall associates!"

CALM was at length restored among the spectators, though wild movements still animated Bali, in the full fervor of his performance. He returned all his live playthings to their bags except a small one, and cried out again for money in the name of all the dead saints he could call to mind.

Randall tossed a franc note forward.

"Bon!" approved Denoter. "That ought to inspire him."

The effect was instantaneous; Bali stood spellbound, staring at the note. It was the first time he had ever received so much in a single donation, and it caused him to suffer from a rush of wealth to the head, a fact which he immediately confessed with theatrical fury, leaping frantically, promising unheralded deeds if the heaven-sent gift were duplicated by another. A moment later a second crumpled ball fell at his feet.

"*I'a, yal*" he cried ecstatically.

Stooping quickly, he gathered up the bills and flung them to his musicians. He picked up the lone snake on the ground and touched its body to his face caressingly, binding it round his head like a turban-cord. Next he held it before him and opened its mouth, into which he inserted his own tongue. The serpent's mouth closed over it, locking, and thus he danced about with the white-bellied thing dangling from his lips.

The Arabs were struck with awe; all round sounded gusts of astonishment, among which Madame Carey gave evidence that she was greatly affected.

"Disgusting!" she gasped.

Finally he removed the snake and wiped blood from his lips, another impressive trick of mountebankery.

Again he lifted the snake toward his mouth and paused in dramatic suspense, an augury that he was about to perform an unusual feat. *Tump-e-dee, tump-ump!* thundered the tom-toms, but at a signal from him the musicians left off from their tumult. The drums' sudden cessation plunged the air into a throbbing, oppressive silence.

A hushed moment passed, during which the natives leaned forward intently, their gaze fixed on Bali's taut pose, his head flung

back, his hand suspended in mid-air, his black locks in wild disarray.

Slowly, statuesquely, with a bold, deliberate gesture, he put the snake's head in his mouth and closed his jaw upon it. A scream was smothered in the crowd. His teeth came together savagely—and the next moment he held in his hand the headless body of the serpent for all to see.

Cries of horror went up, mingled with shouts of amazement. On one side of Randall mumbled the Marabout, who, being half an idiot, was supposed to be proof against shock; yet he was voicing unintelligible dismay. On the other side, Denoter clutched his arm, stunned.

"I've never seen that happen here before," he said slowly.

Bali chewed the nauseous cud, still flaunting in his hand the decapitated, wriggling thing. Denoter looked pale and perturbed.

"No, *mon ami*; it is a different *étude*; not a study in energetics—rather dietetics." He removed his hat, sighing, and wiped the sweat from his brow. "*Zul!* What a slimy repast, the *cuisine arabe!* And not a drop of wine to wash it down!"

Before the crowd could recover from its surprise, Bali took another bite.

"*Gourmand!*" groaned Denoter.

Randall turned away, confessing,

"That gives me a queer feeling in the stomach."

"Me, too. I would like to go now, *tout de suite*, but I can't budge. There is a power stronger than me holding me here—I must see if he swallows it."

Still working his jaws in violent mastication, Bali grabbed up a scepter, a sharp-pointed sword with an ornamental ball at the handle, and began to gyrate in a burlesque imitation of the *danse du ventre*, now and then inserting the point of the weapon in his eyelid, after the manner of dervishes. When he ceased dancing, the crowd knew the performance was at an end, and began to disperse in confusion, talking excitedly.

Randall grasped Denoter by the arm.

"The Marabout says he ate it."

"No." The Frenchman gave a sigh of relief. "I saw him spit it out—but, look! What's wrong over there? *Tiens!* Somebody has fainted."

Randall followed his gesture and abruptly hurried from his side to a spot where Miss

Wesley was bending over her aunt, wan and white of face, swaying on Ahmed's arm.

At Randall's appearance she revived, repelling him with a grimace, and turned away, supported by her niece and Ahmed.

RANDALL stood alone in the square, lost in thought. The place was now deserted by all save the snake-charmer and his assistant, who was collecting the bags and paraphernalia.

"Come, *mon cher monsieur!*" Of a sudden, Bali's voice spoke in Randall's ear. "You look downcast. We will go to the café and drink a cup of coffee." Randall followed, musing on the meaning of this comedy: Life. Could one drink coffee with a companion whose palate tasted of snakes? "There is something I wish to tell you, Sidi."

Outside the Café Maure there were straw mats spread on the ground, on which patrons stretched out in eternal repose, heedless of sunshine or death. Inside loomed a shadowy cavern through a low portal which, as Randall entered, was at once gulped down by inner darkness. He was blinded by the abrupt step transporting him from a dazzle of daylight into the blackness of the tomb, as sunless as a cave miles underground, where disembodied voices sounded all round him bewilderingly, in an incessant frightful melody, now harsh with "gh's" and "kh's" aspirated as with menace, now musical with a low, liquid lulling.

He followed Bali's clutch on his arm gropingly, and when he had been pushed into an unseen seat, he found himself in a stone-walled room of smoke-blackened rafters. His eyes, growing accustomed to the dimness, discerned native figures sitting cross-legged on wall benches. In a darker passageway at his elbow he was startled by a different sound, the *thur-rump* of a huge steel pestle descending mightily in a stone mortar as a Singhalese pounded roasted coffee-berries into powder. The naked black back, stained with perspiration and coffee-dust, glistened like watered silk as the shoulder-muscles moved under the moist flesh with each plunge of the pestle, at which the black man expelled his breath with a resonant, deep-lunged grunt: "*Hongh! Hongh! Hongh!*" Beside him a servitor was preparing orders at an oven breast-high, placing spoonfuls of pulverized

coffee in tiny tin dippers attached to long handles, filling them with boiling water, inserting the dippers for a moment in hot coals, and then carrying them, steaming, to the tables. The serving man, whose fez itself looked like an exaggerated coffee-dipper, set china cups in front of Randall and Bali, and poured a dipperful of the hot, thick liquid into each, over huge lumps of sugar.

Randall felt his mood in eery harmony with his strange surroundings and the words that fell from Bali's lips.

Monsieur knows the village of Tounga at the edge of the desert? He nodded. And *monsieur* has stopped at the lonely inn known as the Refuge du Soleil du Désert, kept by Madame Hachette? Again he nodded, this time struck by the memory of an absinthe-saturated wreck in whose eyes lurked echoes of unspeakable cruelties.

"*Eh, bien,*" pursued Bali intensely; "it was Ahmed who had brought that look to her eyes, that ruin to her body!" Randall started. "And it was Ahmed who made her an outcast among *les Français* and a thing despised even among *les Arabes.*"

Nobody knew who robbed the little safe of all *madame's* fortune. The *militaire* were still searching, but nobody knew, not even the *contrôleur civil* of Kairwan, nobody—but, *pardon*, did Bali say nobody knew? Ah, nobody save Ahmed and himself, for he was there that night, dozing under a table, waking in time to perceive Ahmed's deed and to promise silence—for a reason. But many things had happened since then, and the *sidi* was his friend, was he not? A handful of snakes in a man's face—that did not make a friend.

Dusk had fallen when Randall set out for the hotel, passing through the native city till he came to the sparse European settlement beyond, where the windows of the Splendid were twinkling with acetylene lamps. In front of the hotel he encountered Ahmed, bowing and murmuring polite speech. He waited.

"I am told *monsieur* objects to the camel expedition."

Randall nodded and said simply,

"It cannot be."

Ahmed received the words in an attitude of indolent dignity; he replied, with an insinuating shrug:

"But *madame* seems to insist upon it.

She has commanded the camels for seven in the morning."

Randall hesitated, then began slowly,

"*Madame* does not know—neither does the *contrôleur civil*—" He paused deliberately, watching the other's face.

"What?" asked Ahmed, waiting.

Quickly he finished.

"Who robbed the Refuge from the Desert Sun!"

For the second time he saw Ahmed lose countenance, his eyes gleaming frostily beneath ominous brows; then as swiftly came the inscrutable mien again.

"*Monsieur's* desires are my orders, even when it pleases him to be facetious." Again he bowed, passing on, and Randall thought he heard a passionate gust of Arabic speech behind him.

RANDALL paced up and down the courtyard of the mosque, sensing a subtle change in the natives' attitude, surreptitious glances that mystified him. One of the Four Gates of Paradise, Kairwan was called, and the building most venerated of all was this Mosque of the Barber, an imposing *ensemble* of tinsel-white structures rising in the midst of the plain, ten minutes afoot from the city, upon which the African sun was sparkling with a luster that turned colonnade and minaret into a dream-temple which Randall handled as if it were his first love.

And yet something was amiss. Suddenly two laborers dropped a litter containing a priceless panel of enameled mosaics, scattering it in fragments. Randall hurried to their side, vaguely disturbed beyond the intrinsic cost of the disaster. The workmen said nothing, turning away from him with dull, inexplicable countenances.

Back of him he heard a mutter growing louder, inimical, freighted with accents foreboding evil.

He turned and surveyed the group of idle sun-eaters sitting on a low mound of cement-bags, viewing the scene with slow, incessant eyes, and as usual the unkempt figure of Moulay Malah, the Marabout, was the dominant one in this talkative *dolce far niente*. Two newcomers approached and joined his listeners, acknowledging the saintliness of this man with a mania for rags by kissing him on the shoulder of his soiled burnoose, the while he never ceased

mumbling in a dialect unintelligible to Randall.

"I wish he would go somewhere else for his garrulous siesta," he thought.

Soon afterward, three laborers left their tasks because of sudden illness. They were followed by another trio, slipping away as noiseless as shadows, without a word to Randall, though dropping low words to the Marabout as they passed.

Randall scanned the deserted scaffolding. The mosque contained the sepulcher of Abu Zamaa el-Beloui, who, though only a barber, had been the companion of the great Mohammed at a time when he was struggling with assassins to found a religion. All this splendor, this luxury of edifice for a mere barber—a thought which never failed to amuse Randall, marveling at Mohammed's shrewdness in making a friend of the man who scraped the razor across his throat each day.

But now he grew alarmed; this *contre-temps* threatened the success of his mission.

He turned quickly and set off for the office of the *contrôleur civil* to seek Denoter's aid. Hardly had he reentered the walled city when he was stopped by the snake-charmer.

"Beware the Marabout!" he warned. "He is using his holy words against you."

Bali related the rumors that were flying through the bazaar highways, the news that the holy man was haranguing the Moslems against the unbeliever's overseership.

"Yes, *sidi*; he is demented," Bali added, perplexed. "But there is more than that behind his madness."

Randall wondered if the hand of the impenetrable, majestic Ahmed were concerned in these mysteries. He found Bali's news corroborated when he reached the *bureau* of Denoter, who regretted that he could do nothing to curb such interference.

"Moulay Malah is so sacred among the populace that, if I were to hamper his liberty, I would have a revolution on my hands. But to-morrow you shall have fresh laborers."

They walked through the streets till they came to the Place de Tunis as the snake-charmer's exhibition was drawing to a close. No unusual feat had been performed, no snake devoured with gusto, and the crowd loitered, undecided between boredom and the coffee-houses.

At Randall's approach they turned, expectant, and he saw that he had supplanted Bali as the cynosure of all eyes. Moulay Malah was moving through the crowd with intermittent mumbling. Finally he confronted Randall, his wrinkled eyes glaring from their burned sockets, his right hand leveled at him accusingly.

"Allah's curse upon him! He has the evil eye!"

At once a babel of comment rose in the Marabout's wake as he shuffled away.

Randall flushed. He felt Denoter's hand on his arm and heard the Frechman's grave voice.

"That's bad, my friend. To be branded with the evil eye is worse than the plague—among these superstitious Arabs."

ON THE morrow, Randall hurried to the mosque impatiently and found that another sudden illness had carried off some of the new laborers. He began an inspection of the building, and at once discovered that one of the blocks of cement piling had slipped out of place during the night, imperiling the reconstruction.

The snake-charmer joined him, sympathizing with his plight. Already they saw the Marabout enthroned on a pile of sand, surrounded by a group of idlers. Randall listened, alert, but he could comprehend little of the gibberish issuing from the holy man's beard. Bali spoke to Randall in a low voice.

"He says, *sidi*, that the accident was the will of Allah."

"Why blame Allah for that?" retorted Randall hotly. "Somebody has been tampering with the hydraulic jacks!"

Bali looked at him, impressed, admiring the *Rumi's* wisdom triumphing over the supernatural.

"He says that ruin will befall our mosque as long as you are suffered to remain here," he whispered. "There is a halo of piety about him, and he is lifting a hand of purity against your contaminating touch."

Randall smiled grimly.

"A halo of piety? It looks more to me like a swarm of flies. As for his lifting a 'hand of purity,' it must be that right one, so long unwashed, for the left is at present engaged in a search for fleas."

He turned away gloomily. Bali followed.

"He says that even the white angel knows

you have the evil eye and is shunning you."

He stopped abruptly. His gaze wandered across the expanse of sand outside Kairwan's walls till it encountered two objects far off near a distant road, at the sight of which he paused, noting the familiar sway of the young woman's skirt, the swing of the burnoose beside her.

Of a sudden he saw the figures come to a halt, stock-still, bending forward to peer at something on the ground.

"**O**UI, *mademoiselle*, a horned viper," Ahmed was saying, his eyes resting on the unlovely object close to his feet. The light brown of the snake's body was but little darker than the sand into which it had partially crawled, and the pale spots marking it caused Miss Wesley to perceive a resemblance, even as she drew back, shuddering. "*Mademoiselle* is right," he continued. "It is remarkably like the one which the miserable snake-charmer employs." And he added in Arabic fiercely, "May he die one day of its bite!"

His glance remained fixed on the ground with an odd light, as if in a trance. Then he found a stick and bent over.

"Don't touch it!" she counseled, with a cry.

"Have no fear. With this forked stick I can capture it in a manner in which it can do me no harm."

He planted the forked end of the stick on either side of the viper's neck, pinning it to the ground. The head rose and fell and the body squirmed, but all in vain. With his left hand he held the stick secure in the sand, while with his right he deftly untwisted a length of camel's-hair cord from his turban. He flung the cord about the snake's head as it lifted, and drew a noose tight, whereupon he continued to bind the rest of its body along the length of the stick. Miss Wesley stood at his side, wondering.

"But why do you want to take it with you?" she protested.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"There is a purpose in all Allah does."

"Oh, you enigmatic Arabs!" she sighed.

"We shall never understand you."

As they walked back to the city, he carried the stick and its burden hidden beside the swaying folds of his cloak.

At sundown a squad of soldiers arrived at the Mosque of the Barber to guard it during the night, and Denoter came at the same time to walk back with Randall. The governor explained that his soldiers would continue their surveillance during all of the next day, at Randall's request, since it was Friday, the Mohammedan Sabbath, and no work would be done by natives, but much strolling up and down the winding streets, arm in arm, with rosebuds tucked under turban-edges and a deal of sitting in cafés. Bali's séance would draw the biggest crowd of the week.

"I must come as usual," announced Randall, "to show them I am not afraid."

"Stand near me. They would not dare attack you then."

"Attack? Is it so serious as that?"

"*Malheureusement*, yes—with these fanatics."

For several paces Randall was silent. Then he said firmly:

"I cannot leave the city until the mosque is finished. My career depends upon it."

The other clapped him on the shoulder with amicable warmth.

"But I may be forced to deport you, *mon vieux*. I am responsible to the government for the peace of the population."

At the door of the Splendid, Denoter took leave of him, and Randall strode quickly through the *bureau* and the *salon* till he came upon Miss Wesley bending over a copy of *La Dépêche de Tunis* in the reading-room.

He broached his subject directly, beseeching her, at least for the sake of appearances, to show a semblance of preference for his company rather than that of Ahmed. The Arabs were talking; his work was suffering. Surely she could do that for a compatriot.

Her reply disconcerted him, imputing to his motives a doubt which gave them the color of feeble excuses, and she concluded:

"Aunt Emma says it is your fault. You have lowered yourself in the natives' estimation by associating with the snake-charmer."

He denied it, his defense of Bali's character serving only to increase the tilt of her delicious nose. Ah, *sidi*, if I had been in his place I would have cried out, "Oh, Time, I have a complaint against you—that women should hold their heads so high and



Again he lifted the snake toward his mouth and paused in dramatic suspense, an augury that he was about to perform an unusual feat.

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drop their lashes so low." Randall strolled into the street and saw Ahmed outside the hotel, where he had been watching the scene through the window. He bowed and murmured politely.

"Damn his inscrutable face!" thought Randall, musing on a medley of tangled incidents, associated memories that ran into queer quirks and turnings, and the strange fact that the Arabs had never taken up the game of poker.

An hour later, when darkness had fallen, Ahmed returned to the native city, whence he soon afterward entered the narrow lane called the "Souk of the Blacksmiths," carrying something underneath his bur-noose, gliding like a phantom through an alley carved out of blackness. He slipped into the portal of a mud-walled hovel. A voice challenged him in Arabic from a dim corner, where a candle gleamed.

"Musa has gone to the coffee-house." It was Musa's wife who shuffled forward in lithe sandals, peering at the visitor. "Ah, it is you?" Her lustrous eyes sparkled in the candle-light, and her voice held no note of pleasure, mindful that Ahmed was an arrogant cousin who never sought out his poor relations save for profit.

"Go fetch him!" he commanded, flinging her a sou.

She vanished from the door.

At once he drew the parcel from beneath his robe—two small leather bags, one of which was empty—while his eyes scanned the corner where similar objects were ranged in an even row, the handiwork of Musa, custodian of Bali's snakes.

Ahmed moved cunningly to the smallest bag on the floor, inserting its puckered top in the mouth of his own empty sack. Loosening the thongs, he poured from one bag to the other, thumping gently on the leather to aid the sliding movement which told him of the transfer of contents. Then, with greater caution, he took up the second bag he had brought with him and turned it into that one of Musa's which he had just emptied. This done, he returned Musa's bag to its place in the corner, and, concealing his own parcels under his cloak again, stole swiftly to the door.

"I cannot find him." Musa's wife had returned.

"*B'ism illah!*" complained Ahmed. "I would swear you did not look, lazybones.

But it does not matter." A faint murmur of speech rose to his lips inaudibly. "There is a purpose in all Allah does."

He disappeared into the black alley.

TUMP-E-DEE, tump-ump! Tump-e-dee, tump-ump! Again the tom-toms were beating and the tawny-hued Bali towered above a circle of swarthy faces.

Randall gazed across the holiday crowd at the bright-turbaned natives, who shot him dark glances, and the tourists in hats and helmets—a young British couple, brother and sister, each with an earnest air in their pink faces and a scarlet Baedeker under their arms; a party of Parisians, alluding gaily to the spectacle; Miss Wesley with her aunt, nervously holding a parasol, and Ahmed, in princely composure, except for his restless eyes.

Again the tambours' drumming, the persistent tump-umping from pounding palms rumbled on the air like thunder ill at ease, and Randall felt its booming echo through the square with a tumult more ominous than ever before.

"*Attention!*" warned Denoter. "The slovenly saint is coming."

Moulay Malah pushed through the crowd toward Randall.

"The evil eye!" His voice croaked hoarsely as he shouted above the tom-toms with a menace which Randall sensed in both cry and gesture. "It will bring destruction as long as this infidel remains undriven from our city. Death will befall one who is near him to-day."

Randall started, but contrived to maintain an even mien, facing the Marabout without a word, who finally passed on, repeating:

"Death to one who is near him to-day. I prophesy it."

"*Zul!*" deplored Denoter. "He is risking his reputation as a prophet. But if, by any chance, his prediction should come true—if, *par exemple*, I should be stricken with apoplexy—then it would go hard with you. The Arabs would believe that what he had prophesied had come to pass." His voice changed from grave to gay. "But fear not, Monsieur Randall. All who have been your companions in our city are too robustious to die at this moment, and I assure you of my cooperation. I will try to oblige by not having a stroke."

Bali's figure was capering now, playing with the cobras in the rhythm of the drums. He stepped to a third snake-bag and brought forth a horned viper.

"Tranquillité, do you hear the music? He who sings adds flavor to life. Shall I summon your wife, *Mystère*?" He moved toward the fourth bag, which alone remained to be opened, and the eyes of Ahmed, watching, grew startlingly wide, elated.

But Bali turned back toward a half-franc piece tossed into the sand, and Ahmed's glance darkened.

"I cannot bring her out while my hands are busy gathering Allah's blessing."

Kneeling in front of his musicians, he beseeched them to strive for a faster tempo, so that the tom-toms beat like gunfire and the stolid flute-player blew his shrill notes in a frenzy of abandon, like a lyric leaping for the stars.

This lasted but a moment, for a native abruptly fell over the musicians, propelled from behind, and others on that side of the circle eddied in an agitated pool. The tom-toms ceased, though the flute-player still piped his blown cheeks into buoyant bubbles, oblivious of his lost accompaniment.

MEANWHILE, a cry from a distant street corner was taken up by the crowd, and they turned, amazed to perceive a snake slither toward them across the square.

Some rubbed their eyes and piously uttered the name of the Deity, but this did not alter the situation. A horned viper continued to traverse the *place* toward the music, pausing once to lift her head, as if to listen, and then gliding forward again in haste.

Ahmed was seen to start, his brows in a tangle of bewilderment, intent on the viper.

"This is not part of the *programme*!" cried out Denoter, surprised. "Look at Bali—he is as dumfounded as all the others."

"She is fascinated by the flute-notes," said Randall, struck with wonder. "They are drawing her as straight as a plumb-line."

The Arabs gazed in awe, watching the viper's unswerving course. They fell apart to leave a breach in the circle ahead of her path as she glided in a track so direct, *sidi*, that a magnet seemed to be drawing her,

entranced by the music she had come to know through so many séances that the sense of it filled her being.

Straight through the lane of natives she slid into the circle, and Bali sprang forward, calling:

"*Mystère*! You have come to me! Was it Musa who gave you your liberty?"

The crowd closed round again.

Bali glanced over his shoulder at the bags, and was astonished to behold the fourth one still shut and his assistant squatting near it. His eyes traveled back to the viper at his feet.

"No; Musa did not set you free. You are well named, *Mystère*."

He continued to chatter loudly for his audience's benefit while his wits struggled to comprehend the puzzle—four snakes before him, and yet the fourth bag was still unopened.

He turned to inspect it, but, as he did so, he saw Musa fall over it with a cry, clutching his arm.

A third horned viper wriggled out of the open top with her tongue flickering angrily.

Randall was chilled, breathless in the confusion that swept over the crowd, tearing it asunder and tossing it together again, shouting in panic. He had a feeling of bewilderment within, a feeling of mystery without, mingling in a turmoil of events upon which an unaccountable magic seemed to have fallen.

Caught in a maelstrom of surging forms, he had the sensation of being whirled about in the midst of clamor and headlong strife, which lasted until a body was borne through the crowd, carried with a hurried fierceness of purpose, the green-turbaned head hanging limp across the shoulder, the arm swollen and discolored, the face the hue of eggplant blue, lips distorted and unlovely, in a coma which marked Musa as the victim of a fatal snake-bite.

Randall's face was white.

He heard a voice crying indistinctly, "Death to one who is near him to-day," and the wail of a prophecy fulfilled followed by a hostile roar.

A gigantic hand fell on his arm, dragging him along, and when he was free of the crowd, he found Denoter hurrying him toward the hotel, accompanied by a guard of soldiers.

Behind them came the roar, growing

louder, which materialized in a mob of fanatical Arabs, led by Moulay Malah and only temporarily held in check by the handful of the military. Confronted on the hotel steps, Randall looked down on the crowd and recognized Ahmed, reading in his face no longer an inscrutability but a triumph of vindictive lust.

Back of him the doorway was filled with scared, huddling tourists. The party of Parisians had forgotten its banter. The studious English girl had lost her Baedeker, but her flushed face had gained in solemnity. Miss Wesley's aunt was bemoaning everything vaguely, and Miss Wesley herself leaned forward, taut and breathless.

Randall seemed to stand before her like a lone figure in an Oriental tragedy, fearless and enigmatic. A pallor swept over her cheeks as she saw the Arabs sway toward him, uncontrollable and clamorous, and she put out her hand involuntarily.

"Go into the hotel!" shouted Denoter in Randall's ear.

But he stood his ground, watching the hatred in the upturned faces with an intensity that claimed him as part of the turbulent scene. He felt the sweat under the band of his hat.

The soldiers fell back against the balustrade, yielding to pressure.

"The evil eye!" cried a voice; and others, "Drive him from the city!"

In a moment they would be upon him.

Of a sudden, a towering figure beat its way into the mob with undeniable fury, and Bali stood calling for silence.

"Will you listen to me?" he cried.

From his cloak he held up a handful of wriggling colors, which once before had driven the Arabs in fear. Again the trick succeeded, and they fell back, stilled.

Randall breathed again.

"He is not to blame," continued Bali, quick to seize his opportunity, pointing at Randall. He turned to the crowd again. "Ask Ahmed. It is he who gave money to Moulay Malah to cry out against the *sidi*. There are those who saw him hand it. When has this Moulay ever had so much wealth before? He drinks in every café now—and pays for it." Some of his listeners began to murmur in assent. He brandished his arms toward Ahmed, in whose eyes had come a swift, cold glitter. "It was from his house in the Street of the

Camel that my horned viper came crawling. Lounis ben Taleb was a witness."

Bali swayed. A native woman pushed past him and threw herself upon Ahmed.

"Last night he came to my house, and I saw him at Musa's bags. I thought he came to borrow. But, no!" She beat at his breast with her fists savagely. "Murderer!"

From various quarters came mutterings of sympathy.

Ahmed freed himself from the woman's hot hands and started to withdraw from the crowd, but he was pushed back at a command from Bali. The voice of Moulay Malah sounded again, rallying the faithful against the infidel.

RANDALL saw that his fate hung in the balance, that the snake-charmer and the Marabout were struggling for possession of the crowd's wits. The next moment his heart bounded in his breast, elated, as a slim figure brushed past him and stood facing the crowd. The Arabs looked up at her with wonder in their gaze.

"The white angel!"

A hush fell over them.

"Yesterday I saw Ahmed capture a viper." Her voice rang vibrantly. "A viper like the charmer's. And he brought it back to the city with him." She ceased speaking, and her hearers began to murmur; a new note crept into their comment. "Don't you understand?" she appealed.

Their voices grew suddenly louder, swelling into a burst of acclamation. An eddying movement sent them swirling toward Ahmed like the turning of a tide.

Denoter saw his chance. He descended the steps, summoning his soldiers.

"Arrest Moulay and Ahmed!" he commanded. "Take them to the *bureau*!"

The natives fell back to make a path for the prisoners and their escort, and then followed closely on their heels. In ten minutes the street in front of the hotel was deserted, silent, save for the lone figure of Bali peering through a window in the dusk.

A smile came over his face at the sight that met his eyes—the white angel in Randall's arms, and her lips lifted to his.

Bali murmured contentedly.

"It is the will of Al—" He hesitated, remembering certain words Randall had spoken, and then added waggishly, "But why blame Allah for that?"

Another Adventure of Dr. Goodrich—A Complete Novel

The Locked Room

There's Psychology—We Hear a Lot about It—but of What Use Is It Unless Applied with Common-Sense Methods? Dr. Goodrich Illustrates the Point in Solving a Murder Mystery as Baffling as the Elwell Case

By Stoddard Goodhue

Illustrations by J. M. Clement

DR. DANIEL GOODRICH was smiling broadly. "Psychology," he said, "is only common sense in polysyllabic attire. Or, putting the matter conversely, common sense is psychology in its shirt-sleeves."

I recall just how the medical examiner looked when he made this cryptic pronouncement, the kindly, benevolent face smiling as almost always, a little twinkle in the keen gray eyes. He seemed amused at my interest in the definition; surprised, probably, that I should have thought it unusual, and noticing my questioning look, he elaborated:

"Dress up the most potent fact in a Greek-derivative garb, and it becomes a 'fundamental postulate.' State it didactically, and it is a 'new scientific truth.' Make your sentences long and hang up the verbs at a distance from their subjects—German fashion—and you attain sufficient obscurity to be pronounced 'profound.'"

I knew from his manner that some odd thought was in his mind, probably some paradox or scientific heresy. I was right, for, after a few moments, he said:

"To some extent this is illustrated by two theses that have caught the public attention amazingly in recent years. I mean the Freudian method of so-called psychoanalysis and the Einstein doctrine of relativity.

"Freud, for example, takes the old, simple, familiar truth that the child's brain is 'wax to receive and marble to retain'—the old 'as the twig is bent' idea—and gives it a Greek and Latin terminology, and we have a new school of scientific therapeutics.

"But what about this new god 'relativity'?" I queried. "Sir J. J. Thompson is credited with saying that only twelve men in the world can comprehend it."

The physician made a deprecating gesture.

"He denies having said it, I understand. But even if said, the thing could be true only in a very technical sense—as applied to certain mathematical formulas. It would be absurd to suggest that there are any tangible facts or philosophical conceptions within the grasp of any one human mind in the world that cannot be grasped and understood by thousands of other minds. Rest assured—the doctrine of relativity is no exception.

"Of course I do not mean to imply that Einstein does not have conceptions that are novel. He is a man of splendid imagination, and he indulges in dreams about the atoms and molecules and their relations to time and space that are possibly a little different from the dreams of any other person. No two dreams are ever just alike, you know. Yet Einstein's imaginings are only variants on the dreams that imaginative men have

indulged in at least since the time of Democritus of Abdera and Anaxagoras of Clazomenæ."

There was much more in kind; for once Dr. Goodrich is started on a philosophical thesis, he changes from the most reticent to the most loquacious of men. But I must not claim space to follow him further in this mood just now. Instead, I wish to illustrate the force of his sagacious comment about the cousinship of common sense and psychology by telling one of the medical examiner's exploits in the sleuthing line in which the application of acumen—call it common sense or call it psychology, as you prefer—led to the untangling of the mysteries of a peculiar murder in twelve hours; whereas, I make no doubt, had not the services of this astute practitioner of common-sense psychology been available, the case would have taken its place in official records along with the Elwell case and a hundred others of New York's unsolved murder mysteries.

THE apartment in which Leonard Barthol lived—and died—was like ten thousand other apartments in New York. One might speak of it as a characteristic abode of what would be called—were it not for our democratic aversion to such phrasing—a typical "middle class" New Yorker. By which is meant, of course, a man of moderate wealth, reasonably shrewd business ability and metropolitan morals.

What do I mean by metropolitan morals? There, I see at once, we are likely to get on controversial ground. Let me, then, withdraw the phrase or modify it to the extent of saying that Barthol had one kind of metropolitan morals. Just what that means will appear as we proceed.

Suffice it for the moment that Barthol was a fairly substantial citizen of about forty-five, moderately tall, rather rotund of figure, smooth of face, with a searching blue eye and rather marked tendency to baldness. His typical six-room apartment was ten stories in the sky, with some windows overlooking Central Park and others opening into the sort of cañon called a "court"—a domicile reached, of course, by elevator and with no fire-escape—since the building is of modern fireproof construction—and having the usual elevator service day and night, and a uniformed man or two always in the hall below.

Barthol's household consisted of a wife and two maid servants. The latter did not spend the night in the apartment, being quartered in one of a series of rooms provided for domestics on the ground floor. Mrs. Barthol lived with her husband when she happened not to be at their country place out on Long Island, or down at Atlantic City, or in Florida, or up in Maine or elsewhere.

On the particular day of late autumn with which we are concerned, Mrs. Barthol was apparently at one or another of those alternative places of abode, and Barthol himself, having presumably spent the night alone in the apartment, was lying stone dead on the floor in the little room off the dining-room at the end of the hall, with a revolver in his hand and a bullet-hole through his chest.

That was what the two maid servants found when they came up in the service-elevator from their room on the ground floor and entered the apartment (being provided with a key) at about seven o'clock, as was their custom. The outside hall door, it may be explained, was of the usual type, with a spring-lock.

One of the maids discovered the body almost immediately and gave an appropriate exhibition of hysterics, and the alarm was quickly spread from the elevator-boy to the superintendent of the building and in rapid sequence to the police authorities. It was certainly not later than half-past seven when a police sergeant was telephoning from the apartment for a medical examiner, and less than an hour later when Dr. Goodrich appeared with the hand-bag that is his invariable companion, his face wearing its usual cheerful expression.

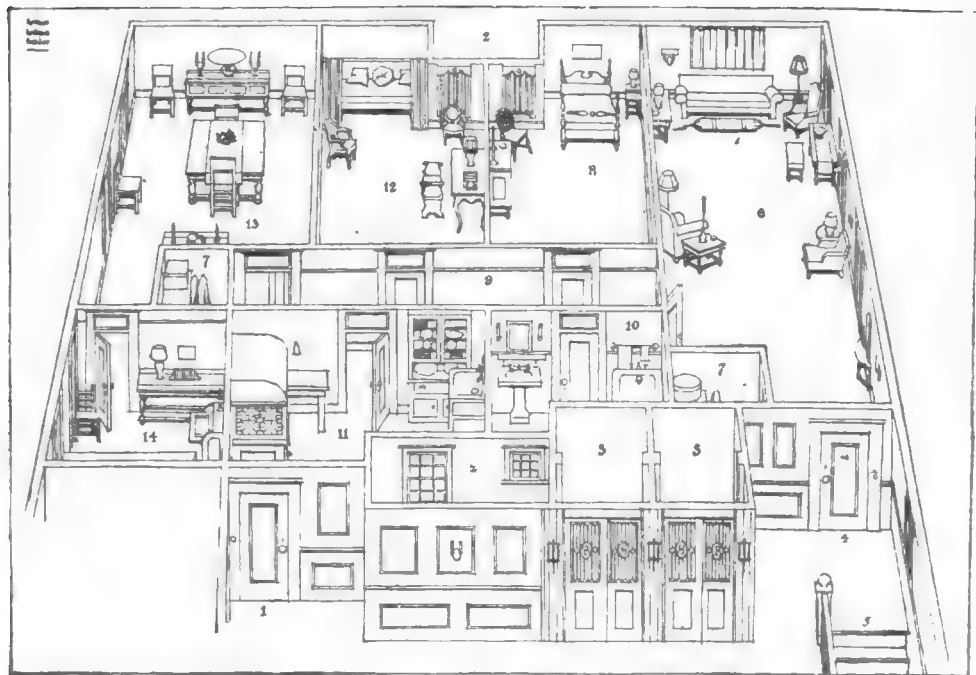
He was ushered down the hall by the policeman.

He did not at once enter the dining-room. He stood in the hallway, just at the entrance.

"I suppose you found this door open?" he asked the policeman who accompanied him.

"Just as it is now," the officer assured him. "The girl says she just walked in and didn't see anything at all or think anything about it till she went through the other door there and looked into the inner room—there she saw him."

The physician glanced up a moment at the transom over the door, then down at the door-handle. He stepped through the doorway and, turning, repeated the inspection.



PLAN OF THE BARTHOL APARTMENT

(1) Entrance to kitchen; (2) Air-shaft; (3) Elevators; (4) Front entrance; (5) Stairway; (6) Drawing-room; (7) Closet; (8) Barthol's bedroom; (9) Private hallway; (10) Bathroom; (11) Kitchen; (12) Mrs. Barthol's room, showing curtained alcove with couch-bed; (13) Dining-room; (14) Room in which Barthol's body was found.

Advancing into the room and placing his bag on the dining-table, he removed his overcoat and gloves and stood for a few moments longer looking about the room before he stepped to the door, there at the left, beyond the sideboard, and went through the little passageway (merely the width of a closet) into the room beyond, where the body of Leonard Barthol lay upon the floor.

This room had no door except the one through which the physician had entered, but it was fairly lighted from a window opening on a court. The curtains, however, were drawn. An electric light was burning in a bracket just above the little desk at the end of the room. There was a couch against the wall beneath the window. A long table against the near wall, at the left, together with a chair or two, completed the furnishing of the room.

"I infer that this was originally intended as a servant's bedroom," Dr. Goodrich remarked.

The officer agreed.

"The girls sleep down in the basement, they tell me," he explained. "So this room

has been used as a 'den.' This double wall is for a closet, but the closet door opens out into the hall."

"Yes; I noticed it as I came in," the physician assented. "This little entranceway, being arranged just as it is, will help us quite a good deal, I suspect."

The policeman's expression showed clearly enough that he had no notion what might be meant by this enigmatic remark.

The body of the dead man lay stretched out in the center of the room in the narrow space between couch and table. It would perhaps be difficult to say whether he had received the fatal shot while sitting on the couch or standing by the table. In either case, he might have fallen in the position the body now occupied, face upward, one hand extended, the other grasping a pistol and with the elbow somewhat flexed.

The physician did not immediately go over to the body. He stood just within the entrance, with his hands in his pockets, his head forward a little. Every faculty was alert, and within twenty seconds he had seen things that another eye might have failed to discover after an hour's scrutiny.

Presently he stepped over the dead man and went to the desk at the end of the room.

The policeman followed him with his eyes and gave an exclamation of surprise.

"Ain't that a bullet-hole in the desk?"

The physician seemed not to be looking at the ragged groove at one end of the desk that had attracted the policeman's attention. His eyes were on a piece of blotting-paper that lay at the other end. But he answered the policeman's comment without a moment's hesitation.

"Yes; that is the bullet-hole. That was what I had in mind a moment ago when I spoke about the little entranceway."

The officer gasped, and was silent. Goodrich did not touch the blotting-paper, but he inspected it very carefully. Presently he came back to the door and beckoned the officer to accompany him.

"We will see how things look out at the entrance while I am waiting for Van Buren," he commented.

When they came to the outside door of the apartment, the physician did what seemed to the officer a very curious thing. He stepped into the outer hall, pausing just a moment to look rather intently at the door-knob, and then went to the stairway opposite the elevators and began to descend. He paused about half-way to the floor below, however, on the landing by the window where the stairway turns, and stooped over to inspect the floor.

Apparently he found this quite satisfactory, for he was nodding his head in seeming approval as he ascended the stairs and came back to the apartment entrance.

"I would like to have you stay here in the hall," he said to the officer, "and not let anybody come up that stairway or go down it."

He reflected a moment, then pushed the elevator-bell. When the car appeared, he incisively questioned the young man who was running it.

"Did a tall, slender young woman take the elevator on the floor below during the last ten minutes?" he asked.

The elevator-boy, apparently somewhat dazed by the question, assented.

"Did she wear a hat with a white ostrich plume and carry a bead bag in her right hand?"

The elevator-boy wasn't sure about that. She was a good-looking girl, and he guessed

that her hat had some white feathers on it. He hadn't noticed the bag. Nor did he know—as further questions revealed—from which of the four apartments that opened off the landing the young woman had come. Several people had gone in and out at about the same time.

"Thank you," said the physician. "Please tell one of the officers down there in the hall that I would like to see Detective McFalcom as soon as it is convenient for him to come here. And ask the man at the door if he knows the young woman we were just speaking about, or if he noticed her especially—in particular, if he noticed which way she went when she left the building."

A FEW moments later, Dr. Goodrich was standing again in the little room where the dead man lay, accompanied this time by his assistant, Dr. Van Buren.

"Another of those interesting cases, Van Buren," the elder man said presently. "In fact, I suspect that this case will afford us about as much interest as any one we have encountered in recent months. It is nicely complicated."

The younger man assumed an argumentative tone.

"It has the outward appearance of being very simple," he said.

"So it has," admitted the examiner. "He is lying there with a revolver clutched in his left hand—" The speaker interrupted himself and laughed. "Funny, isn't it?" he interpolated. "I always keep on saying 'revolver,' simply because the hand-weapon we used when I was younger *was* a revolver. These modern automatics have no revolving cylinder and, obviously enough, shouldn't be called revolvers. But habit is an autocratic master. However, the point is that he holds the weapon in his left hand."

"And apparently," commented the other, "held it fairly close to his side, as I see that the coat is burned a little."

"The coat is burned; we can see that clearly enough," admitted Goodrich, smiling cryptically. "But I didn't think that he held the weapon close to his side—or held it at all, for that matter."

"You mean that he did not shoot himself?"

"Just that. This is murder, not suicide. I can prove it to you in a number of ways. In the first place, is it not a little strange

that this right-handed man should hold a pistol in his left hand?"

"Who said that this was a right-handed man?" demanded Van Buren.

"It is not necessary to have any one say it. We see that at a glance, do we not?"

"Perhaps *you* do. I see at a glance that he is holding a pistol in his left hand, which seems to imply that he is left-handed."

"But you see also that he has a pen and pencil in his upper right-hand vest pocket, and a watch in his left-hand vest pocket. You see the corner of a handkerchief protruding from his left trousers pocket; and you know that all these things should be reversed if he were not a right-hand man."

Van Buren reflected for a moment before he said:

"Yes; perhaps you are right about that. I don't think it is quite conclusive, but at least it is suggestive evidence."

"Well, here is something that is a little more than merely suggestive. You see on the table there a shattered cocktail-glass and a shaker. It is pretty evident that when the man was shot he was on the point of pouring liquor from the shaker into the glass. You see that both the glass and shaker fell to the table and are lying there. What are the respective positions of the two?"

"Why, the fragments of the glass are on this side and the shaker lies a little farther away. But what has that to do with the case?"

"It has everything to do with it. It means that the glass was held in the man's left hand and the shaker in his right. That is the way you or I would hold it, or any other right-handed man. But it is not the way a left-handed man would do under the same circumstances."

"Again I say you are probably right. Yet I repeat that I do not consider it an absolute demonstration."

"All right," laughed the elder physician. "At least I have got you pretty near to the border of Missouri. I will now bring you across and out into the daylight. Come over here by the desk. Now, take a look at that little pencil-sketch on the blotter, done almost automatically, doubtless, while the sketcher was talking to some one. You know a lot of people have a habit of making little drawings as they talk."

"But what has that got to do with the

question of right-handedness? Doesn't a left-handed man ever do a sketch?"

"Assuredly he does. But he doesn't do it in quite the same way. Do you see the direction of those free-hand strokes that make up most of the shadings of the little drawing? They run from northeast to southwest, so to speak, do they not? And are concave on the right side? Do you get it?"

Van Buren nodded his head emphatically.

"Yes; I get it. The pencil must be held in the right hand if you are to make strokes like that."

"Now, perhaps you would be willing to go into court and testify. Well, we aren't ready for that yet. But at least we are made to have our suspicions about the manner of death of a right-handed man who is found lying dead with a pistol in his left hand. Incidentally, there is something still more interesting on the blotter."

Van Buren scrutinized the blotter.

"I don't see a thing on it but a few ink spots," he commented.

THE elder physician was smiling quizzically.

"Don't you? In point of fact, a very interesting piece of history is written on it—in hieroglyphics. I had the good luck to get the blotter in just the right light when I came in here first, and what I saw led me to make two or three other discoveries that you will find interesting. If the young woman hadn't inscribed that report on that blotter, I might not have known about her being here; at least, I might not have known it quite so soon, and so I might have been delayed in putting McFalcon on her track. Accomodating of her, wasn't it?"

Van Buren was grinning.

"Extremely accomodating," he admitted. "Did the young lady put her name and address on the report?"

"Ah, now you are asking too much. You couldn't expect the young woman to do that. Indeed, we are taking some liberties in speaking of her as 'young.' The report says nothing about her age. Nor does it tell us that she is tall and blond, but she left other records to that effect."

"Some little record-maker!" murmured Van Buren, still grinning.

"Well, she had 'some little' experience here last night, after this man was shot. She

was locked in here, and for a long time couldn't get out. And she hadn't the least inclination to stay. Distressing situation, wasn't it?"

"It was," admitted Van Buren. "That is, assuming that your record is authentic. Did she write you a personal letter about this?"

Goodrich was now adjusting his microscope on a little table by the dining-room window. He had laid out a series of glass slides on the table, and he pointed to these as he said:

"I wish you would fix me up some blood specimens on the slides. I would like one from the blood stains on Barthol's hands, and another from the blood there close to the wound in his chest. Then, if you will take the pistol, you will notice that there are blood stains on the handle and also on the barrel. Fix me up slides from these, and mark the slides so that you will know which is which. Then see if you can get enough blood to make a slide—just for a rough differential leucocyte count, you know—from the knob of the dining-room door."

Van Buren whistled.

"Anything else?" he asked.

"Yes; there are two other slides I would like in a moment. One from the stem of the cocktail-glass at the end of the table—not the one near the shaker. You noticed it, I guess."

"I notice it now," said Van Buren.

"Well, you have noticed also, or will notice, a hairpin made of light-colored metal that looks like gold, somewhat bent out of shape, lying on the table near the blotter. I took it out of the waste-basket and put it there. But the point is that there appears to be a little clot of blood in the corner where it is bent, and I want to see how that blood matches up with some of the other specimens. Mark all the specimens, please, so that you can identify them, but let me have them without any mark on them that will enable me to distinguish one from another."

Van Buren set to work with alacrity.

"This is fine!" he said, with characteristic enthusiasm. "Our tall, left-handed young blonde evidently left a lot of records she didn't know about. If she doesn't look out, she'll be sorry she shot him."

Doctor Goodrich regarded his companion

amiably as he adjusted the microscope.

"The tall young blonde was sorry enough; there is probably no doubt about that," he said. "But she didn't do the shooting."

"The mystery deepens," said Van Buren, now speaking very earnestly. "Do you honestly mean to tell me that you know this girl was here and also know that she did not do the shooting?"

Goodrich nodded and gave a little deprecating wave of his hand as if the matter were of but casual interest.

"Just that," he assented. "The person that did the shooting—and who then went out and locked the dining-room door—was much shorter than our blonde, and—" He paused for a moment. "Well, let us look at a few of these blood specimens and then perhaps we may have some further specifications. For the moment, let it suffice that the actual murderer is short and probably dark, totally unlike our blonde—and no friend of the blonde's either, I may add."

ABOUT an hour later, Dr. Goodrich was in the drawing-room of the Barthol apartment with Alexander Webster, the assistant district attorney who usually co-operates with him in such cases.

"Some very interesting clues you have this time, Doctor," Webster was saying.

"I do not recall having a more interesting lot," Dr. Goodrich admitted. "But they are, in many ways, confusing. They enable me to form a clear mental picture of a good many things that happened here last night, but they leave me in doubt as to some very essential things."

"But that of course gives added zest to your problem—since you insist always on thinking of these cases as scientific problems," suggested the attorney, smiling.

"Of course it does!" the physician acquiesced heartily. Then, after a pause, he added, with a little grimace, "Provided we finally get the right answer."

"I trust you for that," said the attorney, with conviction born of experience. He went on to say that at the moment things were in somewhat of an *impasse*, and that McFalcom, so far as reported, had got no clue to the tall blond girl whose presence in the apartment the night before Dr. Goodrich had predicated.

"As to your short brunette," he concluded,

"we have no evidence of her existence beyond what your clues have revealed."

"So far as her mere existence is concerned, you do not need any better evidence than that," the physician cut in, with emphasis. "But her mere existence does us very little good until we get a definite clue as to her name or her present whereabouts. I feel, however, that Mrs. Barthol will probably be able to give us some hints, at least, that will put us on her trail."

"Have you heard from her as to just when she will be here?"

"She phoned early this morning from her Long Island place—out near Oyster Bay, you know—that she was then starting and would be here before ten o'clock. According to that, we may expect her at any moment. Ah, here she comes now, I fancy."

It was indeed Mrs. Barthol who was entering. She came forward with quick, elastic step, and paused a moment before her guests—for as such, her manner seemed to indicate, she regarded them—to announce her identity. Then she greeted them with repressed cordiality, speaking in an undertone, and beckoned them to be seated, herself sinking back on the divan in the corner of the room with her back to the window.

Goodrich, noting the woman's instinctive seeking of this coign of vantage so that her own face would be in the shadow, mentally commented, "The type of woman who cannot forget her own appearance, even in the presence of death." Then he smiled inwardly while his face remained immobile as he supplemented his own mental comment with, "That is to say, a woman who realizes she is coming near to the dead-line between later youth and early age."

In reality, Madge Barthol had rather definitely overstepped that line, though the adequate assistance of cosmetic experts and appliances and Fifth Avenue tailors had done more than could be expected to camouflage the fact. In just the right light, she might have passed for—shall we say thirty or thirty-five? It depends perhaps upon the eye of the observer.

In any event, she made a very personable figure. Her billowy masses of hair were of the shade which you describe as dark red or light auburn, according to the predilections of your vocabulary. An attractive color to the eye of most men, however you

describe it, with high lights that have the glint of gold and massed shadows of transparent darkness to match the eyebrows and eyes which, if not actually black, were at least of velvety brownness.

The black tailor-suit revealed a figure of girlish slenderness; a figure also, so the physician who was appraising her mentally observed, that permitted the nerves to lie a little nearer the surface than might be conducive to amiability of temper and equanimity of outlook. Even in the subdued light it could be seen that there were lines about the mouth a little too deeply graven to be accounted for merely by the grief of present affliction. They told a story which a physician reads only too well on the faces of a distressingly large percentage of woman patients who, like Madge Barthol, have learned from bitter experience that not every man is by instinct a monogamist and that the familiarity of twenty years or so of married life, though it fail to breed contempt, may develop an indifference hardly to be preferred.

THERE was silence for a few moments, during which Mrs. Barthol appeared to be endeavoring to restrain emotion and gain control of her nerves. Finally she spoke in a low tone.

"You can well understand how this terrible news has affected me. Tell me, please, how did it happen?"

Dr. Goodrich, to whom the question was addressed, was regarding her with the aspect of the benevolent physician.

"We do not know as yet just how it happened," he said. "That is to say, a good many details are lacking. We know that your husband died at some time during the night. There is possibility of difference of opinion as to whether he killed himself."

The woman raised her head and spoke with emphasis.

"He would never, never have killed himself," she asserted. "He was the last man in the world who would have done that. Moreover, he was in the best of spirits when I talked to him late last night over the telephone. I was at our country place in Oyster Bay, you know—"

The lawyer became suddenly attentive.

"At what hour last night did you telephone?" he asked.

"First at about eight o'clock—soon after

dinner. And then some time after midnight—in fact, it was near one o'clock. We always stay up late—are regular night-owls," she explained. "I waited until well after midnight, because I thought he probably would be out somewhere and might not come in until late, and I wanted to tell him that I had changed my mind about coming into town." She paused a moment, then seemed to reflect that some further explanation was necessary, and added, "Then during the night I changed my mind again, and so I telephoned early this morning to say I would come in after all."

THE physician had taken up an ivory paper-knife from the table near which he sat. He was tapping his knee with this, and apparently watching the effect—or lack of effect—with interest. He seemed not to look at Mrs. Barthol at all as he commented:

"It is interesting to have your opinion on the question of possible suicide. I may say that I am inclined to agree with you. It is interesting, also—and it may be important—to know that your husband responded to the telephone at so late an hour. That helps us, of course, to approximate the time of his death. The telephone operator down-stairs tells me that your later call from Oyster Bay came at almost precisely five minutes before one o'clock. Do I understand that Mr. Barthol himself responded—in person?"

"Certainly he did. The operator could probably have told you that if she had cared to do so, for she was almost certain to have listened in. Anyway, I talked with my husband for several minutes, and, as I told you, he was in the best of spirits." Another pause, a little shrug of the shoulders. "His voice suggested that he had been seeking a little artificial aid to hilarity—as he was likely to do late at night."

The physician nodded reflectively.

"Possibly your husband's good humor may have been in part due to jovial companionship. And incidentally that point bears on the question of suicide, for it is certain that Mr. Barthol was not alone at the time of his death."

"He was not alone?"

"Yes; we have fairly competent evidence as to that."

"Was it a—a—woman?"

"It was a woman, but we do not as yet know her name. We have thought that perhaps you might aid us in finding her, or give us some clues, by telling us the names of some of Mr. Barthol's friends."

For an instant there was just the suspicion of a smile lurking about Madge Barthol's mouth—a very sad smile that vanished as quickly as it came.

"I regret to say that my husband had a good many women friends who were not always my friends," she murmured. "Some of them I knew by name, and doubtless there were others whom I did not know even by reputation—or lack of reputation." The qualifying clause was added with asperity.

Then she seemed to think that she might have said too much. She looked up appealingly, and there was a tone of apology in her voice as she added:

"Please do not misunderstand me. My husband and I were perhaps as happy as most married couples of our age. But I need not tell you——"

"I think we quite fully understand," said the physician. "We do not wish to distress you by going into unpleasant details, but if you can give us the names of any young women who are known to you as friends of your husband, you will perhaps aid us. Do you, for example, happen to know of one who is tall, very blond—as to hair, at any rate—and left-handed? A very intelligent, courageous, resourceful young woman, I may add."

Mrs. Barthol shook her head.

"His taste always seemed to run to brunettes and to short women rather than to tall ones," she explained.

"That we might infer from seeing you," said the physician. I have noticed," he added, "that most men fancy women who are a good deal like their wives in appearance and temperament, even when they think they have tired of their wives. There are exceptions, however. But, in any event, I am not so much interested at the moment in the blond young woman who was here last night as in another woman who was neither tall nor blond but, on the contrary, short and very dark." The physician's glance was searching. "Just about your height, I should say," he added. Then, after a moment. "But with much darker hair."

The effect of these words was striking. The woman first sat erect, raising her head

quickly, then seemed to relax and settle back, her eyes wide and her lips parted. A moment later she was again erect, hands spasmodically clenched, eyes flashing.

"I think I know who you mean!" she cried, her voice for the first time keyed a little high. "She is——"

The physician raised a hand to enjoin silence.

"One moment, please," he said, with authority. "I should like first, partly for the benefit of Mr. Webster, to make a few further specifications as to the probable characteristics of the woman I have in mind. Perhaps the one you were about to mention may not answer to the description. In a matter so serious as this, it is well to go slowly and endeavor not to make mistakes.

"The young woman I am seeking is, as I suggested, of about your height—say two or three inches over five feet. She has a great abundance of rather coarse dark hair. She has very small hands and feet. She is quick and energetic in her action—always on springs, as it were. She is of excitable temperament, subject to moods—at times elated, at other times depressed—and probably given to outbursts of temper. Does this description seem to apply to any one known to you, Mrs. Barthol?"

The woman appeared to find her voice with difficulty, and her reply came in little more than a whisper.

"Wonderful! Incredible! You are describing Georgie Wicherly as if you had known her always. Do you know her?"

"I never knew of her existence until this morning, and what I have suggested is only a matter of inference. Even now, it does not necessarily follow that the person I have described is the one you have named. We must bear this in mind to avoid the danger of doing any one an injustice or of getting on a false trail. But a young woman who answers more or less to the description I have given you was here last night, and you tell me now that you know of a young woman who also answers more or less to the description——"

"More, rather than less, I assure you," Mrs. Barthol interrupted. "The description is photographic."

"Even so, we must hold judgment in abeyance. But at least we were justified in investigating. Did I correctly infer that this person you name as Miss Wicherly is

a friend of your husband, and might conceivably have been here last evening?"

The woman nodded emphatically.

"She is one of his very particular friends," she said. "And I am afraid that it is much more than possible that she might have been here. I have been away in the country for ten days"—she averted her eyes—"and I regret to say that I have reason to believe that sometimes in my absence my husband has entertained guests who had no right to come here. Georgie Wicherly is one of them."

THE physician had risen, and the lawyer with him, and they had started toward the door when Dr. Goodrich paused and, as an apparent afterthought, said:

"Ah, there is one other thing I meant to ask you about, Mrs. Barthol. I noted that the door of one of the rooms leading off the hall back there toward the dining-room is locked. The maid tells me that is your private sitting-room and bedroom, and that you alone have the key."

"Yes. I have many valuable things in there, and the room is always locked when I am away. Would you like to look into it?"

The physician bowed slightly.

"As a mere matter of form, if you do not mind," he said.

"Of course not," Mrs. Barthol responded with alacrity. She was already leading the way down the hall, and a moment later she had inserted a key in the Yale lock and opened the door. Just as she did so, the telephone-bell rang in the alcove at the other side of the room, where, between the partially drawn curtains, a sleeping-couch could be seen.

Mrs. Barthol excused herself and went to answer.

"Many people will be calling, I presume," she said, "and my personal friends will use the direct wire here as, of course, there is no privacy over the house 'phone there in the hallway." She smiled a little. "The operator may not have listened in last night," she added, "but I have reason to suppose that she usually does."

As Mrs. Barthol disappeared behind the curtain, Dr. Goodrich, who was standing in the doorway, had ample opportunity to inspect the room. But he seemed to glance about only casually. Then he stooped quickly and took what to Webster, standing

behind him, appeared to be a crumpled newspaper from the waste-basket near the door. Without comment, he slipped this under his coat and, with seeming casualness, buttoned the coat. A moment later, when Mrs. Barthol came from behind the curtain—commenting, “A wrong number as usual”—the physician was standing with his hands clasped behind his back. He paused only to remark that they would let Mrs. Barthol know of any developments from time to time, and he and his companion passed down the hall.

A FEW moments later the two men were holding a private conference back in the dining-room.

“Goodrich, this is marvelous!” exclaimed the attorney.

“Do not make too much of it,” said the physicians, peaking very earnestly. “We may be on the track of something, or we may not be.”

“But how can we fail to be?” asked the attorney. “How can you possibly be wrong when your clues led you to give a description that we are told is photographic?”

“Well, we must remember that the same description might apply to a great many different people. You must remember, too, that to a certain extent I was guessing—feeling my way.”

“Nonsense! Wasn’t I there, and didn’t I hear it? It was the most extraordinary thing I ever saw. But, tell me—how in the name of wonder did you do it?”

The physician smiled amiably.

“If we get to any important results from following up this lead,” he said, “chief credit must be given to the faculty known as common sense.”

The attorney smiled in turn.

“But I suppose common sense was fortified by what the microscope revealed,” he suggested. “I can guess at some parts of the record,” he added. “Take the matter of dark hair, for example. I suppose you found a stray hair clutched in Barthol’s hand, or caught on his coat or something like that, and examined it under the microscope.”

The physician smiled broadly. He shook his head.

“As to that particular point,” he explained, “the microscope was not consulted. I have not seen any of this young woman’s

hair. So far as I know, she left no strand of it here. But she did leave a hairpin—quite by accident—and I was making the deduction from the fact that the hairpin was very dark in color.”

“But the hairpin you showed me was light in color—it looked like gold,” objected the attorney.

“Quite so. The one I showed you belonged to the blond young woman whose name is not yet revealed to us. In fact, it was the gold hairpin in particular that led me to infer the blondness of its owner. We shall see sooner or later whether I was right. But the hairpin I refer to now is of a quite different type. It is the kind of implement a woman would use who has heavy, dark, rather coarse hair. The one I showed you would be used by a woman with fluffy, light, fine-textured hair. You remember, I think, that we once discussed the philosophy of hairpins.”

The attorney laughed.

“Yes; I recall something about that. To tell the truth, I didn’t place much confidence in it. But I am beginning to be a convert.”

“Well, hold your convictions in reserve till we see how the philosophy will work out in this case. Apparently we shall be able to test it very soon with reference to the young woman who was named to us as Miss Wicherly. McFalcom telephones that he had found her and will have her here in half an hour. As for the blonde—we shall see what we shall see.”

The physician was turning toward his microscope, but his companion restrained him.

“Hold on a minute, Doctor,” the attorney urged. “Put me wise as to one or two points. I recall that you gave your hypothetical nervous, alert, energetic, small brunette a pair of small hands. What clue told you that?”

“No clue that had to do with that girl’s hand—except, indeed, a little blood from a cut finger, which told me important things, but said nothing about the size of the finger.”

“You were guessing, then?”

“Yes, and no. Partly, I did guess that a little woman that had small feet would have small hands. Partly, I inferred that a woman of that particular temperament would have very small, slender hands.”

“You are speaking in riddles, but your

inference appears to be correct. What do you mean, though, when you say you knew the woman had small feet?"

The physician was laughing outright now.

"As to that particular point, we are getting down to basic principles. I merely looked at her tracks, and for the sake of a permanent record made a tracing of them on transparent paper."

"Great Scott! That is what you were looking at out there on the stairway landing? The policeman told me something about it."

Again the physician shook his head.

"No; that was something quite different," he asserted. "The feet of which I have prints did not go down the stairway, so far as I know. At any rate, the tracks, as I discovered them, were not out in the hallway, but right here in the apartment. They enabled me, I may say, to go a long way toward reconstructing the story of what happened here last night. But wait until we get in touch with the young woman herself, and then you shall see and judge how well—or how ill—I have done the job."

A characteristic reflective pause. Then:

"By the way, there is one other point to which I might call attention—the fact, namely, that the person who did hold the pistol was almost certainly of short stature—just about the height, as it happens, of our little brunette, assuming that I am right in gaging her height as about five feet three and that Mrs. Barthol is right in identifying her as Miss Wicherly."

THE attorney ran his fingers through his hair reflectively.

"I give it up," he said presently. "What is this other bit of evidence that proves that the murderer was of short stature?"

"The very simplest and most elementary clue that we have, and one of the first that I discovered. Even the policeman saw it, though, of course, he did not draw any inferences from it except that it was the track of a bullet."

"Ah, I get it now!" said the attorney, his face brightening. "You mean the groove in the top of the desk there. And you mean, further, I suppose, that it shows the line of flight of the pistol-bullet. But how does that prove that the shot was fired by a short person?"

"It doesn't quite *prove* it, of course," the physician admitted. "But that groove in

the desk-top shows exactly the line of flight of the pistol-bullet, and proves that the pistol was held (taking into account, of course, the location of the wound in Barthol's side) just about three and a half feet from the ground. Now, unless I am greatly mistaken, the assassin stood in the passageway there between the dining-room and the room in which Barthol was standing. The assassin, not wishing to be seen, stretched an arm through the doorway and extended it fully, so that the pistol came close to Barthol's side. If the person who made this maneuver had been tall, the direction of the bullet would have been much more acutely downward, and, after passing through the victim's body, it would have struck the desk a foot or more below where it actually did strike. Only a short person would be likely to hold the pistol in such a way as to produce the observed results."

The young attorney was the picture of animation.

"But why doesn't that come pretty near clinching the case against this Miss Wicherly?" he urged. "The broken glass, the blood on the revolver handle, blood on the handkerchief, Miss Wicherly herself—a person just the right height—what more do you ask?"

"It does make a pretty serious indictment," the physician admitted. "But there is a counter-argument."

"Let us have it!" cried the attorney.

"It is simply this: The handkerchief that I found there in the closet had been knotted first about a finger and then had slipped off and, making a little roll or wad, had been clutched in a hand, with the finger still bleeding slightly. Here is the specimen. I picked it up carefully, and if you glance at it, you will see that it undoubtedly was clutched with a left hand, and that it is the forefinger of the left hand that was cut."

"I see that," the attorney admitted eagerly. "But what about it?"

"A whole lot about it; for the hand that held the pistol that shot Mr. Barthol was a right hand," affirmed the physician.

"How in the wide world do you know that?" challenged the attorney.

"I do not *know* it, and I ought not to have asserted the thing quite so positively. What I mean is that I am very confident it was a right hand. The reason I am confident is

that I feel sure that the person who fired the pistol was standing in the doorway, almost altogether screened from observation; and it will be clear to you, if you will just step here and look the field over, that only a right arm could have been thrust round that corner so as to bring the pistol into the position in which we know it to have been held. If the person who did the shooting had stepped out into full view, so as to be able to use the left hand, Barthol certainly would not have been standing there with his left side toward the door—as the track of the bullet through his body shows he was standing. He certainly would have turned toward his assailant. From this and one or two other observations I am confident that the pistol was fired by a right-handed person. But I think we shall find that Miss Wicherly is left-handed.”

THE lawyer was obviously turning the evidence over in his mind. He nodded affirmatively as he said:

“Well, accepting your view, that falls in with your other suggestion, based on the fact that Barthol was holding the pistol in his left hand. You say that you think the person who put it in his hand was left-handed, and acted under a sort of subconscious direction—selecting the left hand because it was the hand which that individual would have selected if he or she were holding a pistol. But now you seem to prove that the assassin was right-handed. To be consistent, you must claim that the person who tried to camouflage the murder by putting the pistol in Barthol’s hand was not the assassin.”

The physician looked up.

“Why, of course I claim that,” he said. “I have claimed that all along. Did I not tell you that there was a tall blonde here, and that she was locked in with the corpse, and had the very deuce of a time escaping?”

The attorney shrugged his shoulders rather wearily.

“Yes; I haven’t forgotten that,” he assented. “Though I may add that that part of the proposition hasn’t been proved to me yet. But assuming that you are correct, it would appear that two people were here, and the one who did the shooting escaped and locked the door—the dining-room door there leading into the hall, I suppose you mean?” The physician nodded,

and the attorney continued: “Well, all that would fit in very nicely with the rest of your story if you were to assume that your petite brunette did the shooting. She slips away and locks the door and leaves her friend, the blonde, ‘in Dutch,’ so to speak. But now you claim that she did not do the shooting. Aren’t you getting all tangled up?”

“The tangling was done before I came,” said the physician, laughing. “What I am trying to do is to accomplish a little untangling. I don’t think you have uncovered any inconsistencies so far. If we were to assume that our petite brunette did the shooting and went out and locked the door, what explanation have we to offer of the undoubted fact that she slipped immediately into the clothes-closet in the hall, just a foot or so from the dining-room door, and remained there long enough to make the tracks and, inadvertantly, to drop the hair-pin and the handkerchief? Why should she do that instead of making a bee-line for the outer door and going home with all expeditiousness?”

“Search me!” cried the attorney.

“I don’t need to search you,” said the physician. “I know the answer—at least, I think I do. When Miss Wicherly comes, I expect her to confirm my inference. Shall we have her here, or go to the drawing-room to meet her?”

“Better bring her back here. Being right on the spot will be best. But before we begin with her, tell me a little more about your hypothetical blonde. How did she escape, if she was locked in as you say?”

The physician smiled quizzically, but shook his head.

“We will come to that a little later,” he said. “Now, let us check up on some of the things we should learn from Miss Wicherly. In particular, we shall see whether she has a cut forefinger of the left hand; and then whether she knows the name of the tall blonde who came down the hall—escorted by Barthol—while she was hiding in the closet.”

“Ah, I begin to understand,” said the attorney.

“By the way, Webster,” said the physician, “we have been so busy talking about Miss Wicherly that we have forgotten to say anything about the interesting condition of Mrs. Barthol’s eyes. You noticed it, I suppose?”



She was seated on the couch when the shot was fired. But the partially closed door had screened from view even the arm of the person who held the pistol.

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"Eyes? Mrs. Barthol's eyes? What was there to notice?"

"Well, I suppose that shows the advantages of a medical education. Doubtless there are legal points that I should overlook as readily. But what I meant was the way her left arm confirmed the testimony of the eyes. Interesting that it was the *left* arm, isn't it? We must bear that in mind."

"All of which to me says precisely nothing," declared the attorney.

IT MIGHT fairly be said that Miss Wicherly created a mild sensation when she arrived and was shown into the dining-room.

In the first instance, she conformed so accurately to the description that Dr. Goodrich had given of his hypothetical petite brunette that Webster was led to exclaim, almost involuntarily,

"Goodrich, I hand it to you!"

The remark was made in an undertone, but probably it came to the young woman's ears, and it doubtless roused various questions in her mind. Either what she overheard or the way the two men were looking at her caused the girl to pause just inside the threshold and draw herself up haughtily to her full five feet two or three inches—possibly, with the aid of French heels, an inch or so beyond the latter figure.

Her eyes, which were prominent before, now seemed almost staring; yet the effect was to enhance rather than to mar her beauty. It gave one the impression of an exceedingly wide-awake personality. Indeed, the entire figure and manner of the girl, no less than her facial expression, suggested alertness and vigor. Yet the altogether notable thing that caused the men to view the girl with an intentness approaching a stare was her extraordinary and compelling beauty.

"Pretty," Mrs. Barthol had described her, but that was hardly the word to apply to a face of classical oval, with every feature as perfect as if modeled by a Greek sculptor; a complexion like the petals of one of those white rambler roses that have the suggestion of pink underlying the pearly surface, set off by great masses of lusterless black hair protruding beneath a jaunty turban.

On the instant of her appearance the

girl's cheeks had been pale as alabaster; now they were suffused with color.

And she had found her voice and was asking a question as to what might be the meaning of what she appeared to regard as a strange summons.

Dr. Goodrich enlightened her to the extent of naming Webster, with emphasis on his position as assistant district attorney, mentioning also his own name and official function.

"Has something dreadful happened to Mr. Barthol?" the girl demanded, with every appearance of authentic surprise and solicitude. The physician motioned her to a chair, and he and the attorney seated themselves on opposite sides of the table.

"Yes; something has happened to Mr. Barthol," he said.

The girl leaned forward a little in her chair.

"You mean—that he—that he is dead?" she gasped.

The physician nodded.

"You were already aware of that fact, were you not?"

"Oh, no! Indeed I was not!" the girl cried out. She seemed on the point of collapse. Then she made a manifest effort to control herself as she declared, in broken sentences, that when last she saw Mr. Barthol he had been quite well, that she had, of course, feared something when she was summoned, but had no idea as to what it might be. She apologized profusely for the show of emotion that she now could not control. Could they tell her, please, just what had happened—just how it had happened?

Instead of answering her questions at first, Goodrich sat silent for a little time, to give her opportunity to regain a measure of composure. His face was very grave, but kindly.

"Miss Wicherly, we need your aid in finding out just how Mr. Barthol met his death."

"But what can I possibly tell you?" said the girl, apparently astonished at the physician's words. "I knew Mr. Barthol slightly, it is true. But I have not seen him——"

The physician leaned forward a little and fixed his eyes more intently on the girl.

"One moment, Miss Wicherly!" he exclaimed, and the voice now carried something of menace perhaps, no less than of authority, though it was low-toned as before

and with no suggestion of harshness. "Before you say anything at all that may have to be unsaid later, let me tell you a few things that are already known to us. They will suffice, perhaps, to convince you of the desirability of frankness."

The girl's face took on an expression quite different from what it had worn before. There was something of furtiveness now, a suggestion of terror, even, in her look.

"We speak to you in all friendliness, Miss Wicherly," went on the physician. "But we speak also with authority of officers of the law. What I wish to tell you is that we know—or, at least, we have every reason to believe—that you were here last night, if not at the actual moment when Mr. Barthol died, then shortly before that time. But before I go further, may I ask you to remove the glove from your left hand?"

If the girl's face before expressed surprise, it now betokened utter bewilderment. She murmured,

"I do not understand."

"If you do not understand—that is, if you do not know anything about this affair—then there certainly is no reason why you should not take off your glove."

"Of course there is no reason. But it seems such a strange request."

"To make it seem less strange, I will explain why I make the request," said the physician. "Either there is or there is not a little cut near the tip of the index-finger of your left hand."

EVERY vestige of color had left the girl's face now. For several moments she sat seemingly irresolute.

"But what if I decline to take off my glove?" she said presently, in a very low tone.

Webster, who had been silent, now spoke up quickly.

"In that event," he said, "it will be necessary for me to put you under arrest, on suspicion of complicity in the murder of Leonard Barthol."

The girl gasped and gave a little cry of horror. She drew a deep breath, and the color came and went in her cheeks. Even the attorney noticed that the pulses throbbed tumultuously at the sides of her neck.

"Oh, you will not do that!" she gasped. "You will not—I know you will not! You cannot believe that I would injure him! I

was—his best friend. I—I loved him better than any one in the world." The words came haltingly, hardly above a whisper. But they carried conviction.

"If that is true, Miss Wicherly," said the physician, "you will wish to aid us in discovering who is responsible for Mr. Barthol's death. We have not accused you of a direct share in the crime. Perhaps you had no responsibility at all. But you were here last night with him; you cut your finger on a cocktail-glass there in the little den. The finger bled rather profusely, as those little incised wounds will. Mr. Barthol helped you to bind up the wound, and some of the blood got on his hand. Then some one else came to the apartment, and, as you did not wish to be found here, you stepped into the closet there in the hallway"—indicating with his hand—"and remained there while this other person came down the hall and through the dining-room and went into the den where you had been. Am I not right?"

The girl now seemed dazed rather than astonished. She nodded her head slowly, but seemed incapable of speaking.

The physician continued:

"I will tell you a little more before I ask you one or two questions. After this person entered and had gone through the dining-room here and into the den, so that the coast apparently was clear, you left the closet and started along the hall, intending to go out of the apartment. But before you reached the door you heard some one else coming, and you retreated again into the closet and stood there as before while this second person came by."

"But no one saw me there!" the girl gasped.

"Quite true no one saw you there," the physician assented. "But, nevertheless, there is full record of your being there—else I should not be able to tell you about it. I have told you this to convince you that I know a great deal about what you did last night. At the moment, I shall not tell you how much or how little more I know. Instead, I wish to ask you this question: Who were the two people who came in, separately, last night, while you were hiding there in the closet?"

The girl hesitated for what seemed a long time, and then finally she spoke.

"But I did not see them."

"Perhaps not." The physician's voice was even more subdued than before. "You did not see them, but you did know who they were, did you not?"

The girl seemed to realize the futility of denial.

"I think I know who one of them was," she whispered.

The physician nodded approvingly.

"That one, if I mistake not, was the young woman who came first," he said. "Mr. Barthol went to the door to let her in, and you heard her speak as they came down the hall. She is, I believe, a tall, blond woman. What is her name?"

"Dora Werth," the girl faltered.

FURTHER inquiry elicited the information that the girl in question was indeed the Dora Werth who had figured as the season's sensation at one of the summer midnight exhibitions, and in Sunday supplements as "the prettiest girl on Broadway."

It was divulged, also, and much to the interest of the investigators, that Miss Werth had been very friendly with Mr. Barthol at one time, but that in recent months their "affair" had apparently been broken off. Miss Wicherly proved a very reluctant witness indeed, when details were sought as to this matter, and the reason for her reluctance was finally revealed in the fact that her family pride was involved. The long and short of the matter was—and it was distinctly long in being elicited—that Miss Wicherly had an only brother, indeed a twin brother, who had become enormously interested in Dora Werth, to the consternation of his wealthy and aristocratic parents.

"My brother was a captain in the A. E. F., and he met Dora over there and has been crazy about her ever since," the girl finally admitted.

"Your brother was wounded, was he not?" asked the physician.

"Yes; he was hit three times while storming a machine-gun nest. But he captured it all the same," she explained proudly.

"I presume he has kept his pistol as a souvenir?"

The girl seemed curiously confused.

"I—I think so," she faltered.

"You think so? Have you not seen it frequently?" the physician said very slowly. "Have you not seen it very recently?"

Did you not see it in this room last night?"

It was one of those questions for which Dr. Goodrich is famous—the kind that Webster has described as "inspirational guesses."

It was not necessary for Miss Wicherly to answer the question in words. The wide-open eyes, the ghastly face, the heaving bosom seemed to answer with unchallengeable emphasis. But it was evident that the girl wished to speak, and finally she found her voice to say,

"Mr. Barthol was going on a vacation up in the Adirondacks, and Jack may have loaned him the pistol."

The physician's eyes did not leave the girl's face. They had the search-light quality that malingerers fear. The girl cowered before that glance, yet she did not avert her own eyes. She was too intent on the implications of the question she knew was coming to think of herself. And the question was this:

"Miss Wicherly, you have implied that you do not know who the second person was that came down the hall and through this room while you were hiding in the closet. Are you prepared to go on the witness-stand and swear that it was not your brother?"

The girl hesitated a long time before she answered. And when she did answer, her tone and manner told the observers that she was speaking what she believed to be the truth, but revealed also, by implication, the doubt that was in her mind.

"I told you I did not see this person. I heard no voice. I hardly heard a step. I heard the outer door open and close, and I knew some one was coming. And I ran back into the closet. Through a crack in the closet door I saw a shadow pass—just a shadow. Then I slipped out and tiptoed along the hall to the door and went out."

The physician was stroking his chin reflectively. He seemed not to be looking at the girl as he asked,

"Have you seen your brother this morning?"

"No; he has gone to Philadelphia."

"He was in New York last night—until late in the evening, I take it."

"Early in the evening," she corrected. "He went to Philadelphia on the nine-o'clock train, I think."

"You mean to say you understood he

intended to go on that train. You did not go with him to the station, I take it?"

"No; but I heard him say that he intended to go at nine."

"And what was the time when you left the apartment, after being twice interrupted in your attempt to go out?"

"I am not sure about the exact time, but I think it was quite a little after nine," the girl averred, with more animation than she had shown since the earlier part of the interview. Then, almost as if soliloquizing, she added earnestly: "Oh, Jack did not do it. I know he never did it."

"Perhaps not," said the physician kindly; "but you will readily understand that we must see him and have a talk with him. And, by the way, how tall is he?"

"He is just a little taller than I am." The girl seemed to find the question puzzling, but to the attorney it was full of meaning.

"One other question," said Dr. Goodrich, "and I am done—for the moment, at any rate. I noticed that you are left-handed. Is your brother left-handed also?"

"No; he is right-handed. By the way," she said, "I have not shown you my left hand. The finger is cut, just as you said. It was cut on a cocktail-glass. We clinked glasses a little too hard."

WHATEVER doubt the assistant district attorney had entertained as to the validity of Goodrich's scientific inferences had vanished long before the interview with Miss Wicherly was over.

"I have seen you do good things before, Doctor," he cried enthusiastically, when the two were alone; "but this is almost too good to be true!"

The physician waved his hand deprecatingly.

"Save the applause until we get to the end of the trail," he urged, with genuine modesty.

"It appears to me that we are within sight of the end right now," the lawyer said.

"Don't be too sure of that," the physician cautioned. "We are getting on, doubtless. And after we have had a talk with Miss Dora, who is no longer a hypothetical blonde but a known personality, we may be a good deal forwarder. But that remains to be seen. Meanwhile, I have a very nice *questionnaire* in my head for her edification."

While the two men were awaiting the

coming of the show-girl, whom McFalcom 'phoned presently he had found and was bringing with him, they interviewed Mrs. Barthol in her private sitting-room. They found her lying on the divan, in the curtained alcove, attired in a loose wrapper, showing clearly enough the evidence of her grief, but with the outward manifestation of her emotions well under control.

She questioned her visitors eagerly as to what they had learned, but received only equivocal answers. The chief object of their visit was to question her as to her knowledge of the young woman whose name had been given them by Miss Wicherly.

"Do you know of a girl named Dora Werth, who is one of the star performers in Broadway vaudeville?" Dr. Goodrich asked her.

"Dora Werth? I do remember her. She belonged to the vintage of last year, so to speak." There was bitterness in the tone. "Yes; she was one of the favorites. I had forgotten the name. You asked me this morning about a blonde. This one answers to her description. But, so far as I know, she has not been with my husband in recent weeks." Mrs. Barthol hesitated, and appeared to meditate. Finally she went on:

"Yes; there is no reason why I should not tell you. I should have told you before. For some time I have had my husband watched by a private detective. I have contemplated a separation. Negotiations for it were at one time under way, but he promised me faithfully that he would change his habits, and for the time I believed him. Indeed, it was only recently that I learned about a new affair—very recently."

"But you say this blond chorus-girl, or show-girl, did not figure in recent reports," prompted the physician. "May I ask who did figure?"

The woman's eyes flashed, and the lines about her mouth deepened.

"Miss Wicherly, chiefly."

"And, as she is a woman of your own class, you naturally found her intrusion even harder to bear than that of a person like Dora Werth?" the physician suggested.

The woman nodded emphatically.

"Naturally so," she admitted. She now seemed on the point of breaking down.

"We quite understand," said the physician sympathetically. "And we won't trouble you further at the moment."

The two went back to the dining-room, and a few moments later the girl they were expecting was ushered in. She was tall and willowy and of faultless figure; and her face was positively Madonna-like—small featured, with rosebud mouth and great appealing blue eyes, set off by an extraordinary profusion of silky flaxen hair, bobbed in the prevailing mode, and escaping from under the picture-hat in such abundant tresses as to suggest a supreme example of nature's capacity for luxurious endowment of a favorite recipient.

Even a sophisticated observer might have expected that Miss Dora would give instant manifestation, or at least suggestion, of a genuine or simulated surprise or annoyance at the unusual experience of receiving an invitation that amounted to a command from people unknown to her. It might also have been assumed that a sense of apprehension would mingle with the emotion, if it were true, as Dr. Goodrich believed, that she had experienced a very trying ordeal no longer ago than last night in the room where she now found herself.

But the observer, sophisticated or otherwise, who expected the young woman to give outward manifestation of these or any other emotions would have reckoned without his host. In point of fact, aside from that vague wistfulness and wonderment which seemed to pervade her countenance as a quite spontaneous and unconscious endowment, there was nothing to give even so trained an observer as Goodrich an inkling of what was in the young woman's mind.

SHE was seated presently, in the chair which Miss Wicherly had occupied shortly before, with her inquisitors just where they had been during the preceding interview; and for aught that any one could discover, she was as placidly composed as if she were having the most casual interview with, let us say, some manager regarding whose estimate of her charms she was totally indifferent.

For a little time Dr. Goodrich was silent, not apparently inspecting the young woman carefully, nor yet, probably, outlining his campaign of questioning. He was merely getting that appropriate background that can be secured not otherwise so well as by preliminary silence.

When, finally, he spoke, it was in the usual low-toned voice and with calm impersonality.

"Miss Werth, when you left this apartment at about half-past eight o'clock this morning, why did you walk down to the floor below to take the elevator instead of taking it on this floor?"

If the young woman was surprised, she manifested quite unusual histrionic capacity. She raised her head a little, poising it daintily on one side, and looked directly into Dr. Goodrich's eyes as she said, in a tone of the most casual character and in a voice that was low and even musical,

"I fear I do not understand you."

The physician smiled.

"I think you understand me quite well, Miss Werth. It is not necessary to repeat the question. Nor, for that matter, need I wait for your answer. You went down to the other floor, obviously, in order that the elevator-boy might not know that you came from this apartment."

The girl still regarded him with a bland, unsmiling countenance, which now showed just a suggestion of surprise.

"I think you must be mistaken in my identity," she said, with only a moment's hesitation. "I shall be more than glad to answer any questions you may ask, although I confess that I have no intimation whatever as to why you have sent for me. I repeat that presumably you have mistaken my identity. Certainly I cannot answer the question you have just asked, except by saying that it is to me quite meaningless. I did not take the elevator this morning in this building at this floor or at any other."

Dr. Goodrich's next move was one calculated to astonish both his associates. He rose and went toward the young woman, and stooped as if about to kneel before her.

"Pardon me," he said, "but if you do not mind, I would like to have you press your heel against this little pad."

The little pad in question appeared to be of the type used to ink rubber stamps. As the physician spoke, he pressed this against one of the girl's heels, having lifted her foot without much ceremony. Then he brought from his pocket a small pad of paper and pressed this against the heel.

Apparently without glancing at the imprint that he had made, he turned and walked across the room and disappeared

into the adjoining one. Perhaps half a minute later he came back and resumed his seat.

"I notice that you are wearing the same shoes you wore last night, Miss Werth," he said presently. "And I am interested to observe that you are, as I suspected, left-handed."

It is high tribute to the girl's histrionic capacity that even this did not cause her face to lose its aspect of placidity. She glanced down at her feet, seemed to reflect a moment, and then said:

"Why, now that you mention it—yes, I think these are the same. And I am left-handed, though I can't imagine how you guessed it. Do you mind telling me how you knew that?"

The physician smiled amiably.

"I fear I haven't time to explain that in detail just now," he said. "Some other time I will tell you about it. The matter is more important for you than you perhaps suppose. But, since we know that you are left-handed, let that suffice for the moment. I have one or two very important questions to ask you. I fear that you are not in a mood to answer questions. Possibly, after your experience of last night, you feel a little bit dazed. I do not wonder at that. So I am going to refresh your memory a little as to what happened last night, before I ask you the really important question."

To this, as to everything that had gone before, the girl responded by no obvious change of manner, no modification of expression, and by no word of protest.

The physician's manner now matched the girl's casualness, but his words were certainly calculated to penetrate the girl's armor.

"Briefly," he said, "you came here, Miss Werth, at about ten minutes after nine last night. You had been here a good many times before, but not in recent weeks. You came this time for a special purpose, bringing some letters that Mr. Barthol had written you, and expecting to receive in return certain letters you had written him. Mr. Barthol met you at the outer door and escorted you down the hall to this room and into the private den there beyond. While Mr. Barthol was pouring out a cocktail for you, and while you were sitting on a sofa by the window, some one who had entered this dining-room without Mr. Barthol's knowl-

edge—some one who may or may not have come to the apartment with you—slipped quietly into that little passageway between the two rooms and thrust an arm round the door-jamb and fired a pistol against Mr. Barthol's side with fatal effect."

THE effect of all this on the girl was what might have been expected had the state of the weather been the subject of his discourse.

"An extraordinary person she certainly is," the physician was thinking. Aloud, he continued:

"I may mention incidentally that the bullet, after passing through Mr. Barthol's body, chanced to strike the desk over at the end of the room just at a point where your hat and bag—not the hat you are now wearing and not the bag you hold in your hand—were lying." He paused and waved his hand in the direction of the little table where his microscope stood. "A little strand of an ostrich plume was cut away from the hat, and a few beads were torn from the bag. And, curiously enough, the packet of letters that you had in the bag was perforated by the bullet. These are minor but interesting details. Have you any comment to make about them?"

The girl slowly shook her head.

"Only to say that you are making a most elaborate mistake," she replied in the same unperturbed tone of voice. "I find it all tremendously interesting, but it only shows more fully that you have made a misidentification. That is"—the idea appeared to come as an afterthought—"that is, if this is not all pure fiction."

"As to that," said the physician dryly, "you are the best judge. You, also, of all persons in the world, are the one best able to say whether I am fictionizing when I suggest that the person who shot Mr. Barthol dropped the pistol, or tossed it to the floor, at your feet, and then went out through this dining-room—through yonder doorway—and closed the door and locked it, leaving the key on the hall side. You are best able to judge whether I am fictionizing when I state that you subsequently manifested extraordinary courage and resourcefulness, that you made a heroic and ultimately successful effort to secure the key. You put one of these chairs there by the door so that you could stand on it. You

took the blotter from the desk in the other room and put it on the seat of the chair, to prevent marring the surface. Incidentally, I may say that your thoughtfulness in this regard seems to me perhaps the most extraordinary thing of all the remarkable things you did.

"Briefly, standing on the chair, and operating through the small transom there above the door—and leaving your finger-marks on the dust on the transom window, I may add—you fished for the key—with ultimate success."

The physician paused, and, as before, the girl sat there like a statue. But now it could be seen that her breathing was labored and that her face had changed color a little. But she made no attempt to speak, and there was nothing in her manner to suggest either affirmation or denial.

Dr. Goodrich had now changed his tactics a little, and was looking directly into the girl's face as he continued, speaking very slowly:

"You used a bent hairpin—the same type that you are still wearing—for a fish-hook, and for a string a raveling of very unusual character—from a brown scarf you were wearing. This scarf is made from a textile that came from Germany. Perhaps some soldier brought it to you. There is very little of this textile—it is manufactured from seaweed—in this country. That piece of string by itself would have served to identify you, even if there were not many other items for identification."

Another of those ominous pauses. The stillness of the room was oppressive. Then of a sudden the physician was on his feet. He was leaning a little toward the young woman, and his voice took on a slightly altered tone, a compromise between friendly suggestion and command, as he said:

"I pass over details at the moment, Miss Werth. I wish merely to ask you this question: Was the soldier who brought you that scarf by any chance the person who came quietly through this room last night while you were sitting in there on the sofa, and thrust an arm about the corner of the door-jamb, and fired the pistol that caused the death of the man you had come to see? In a word, was the pistol fired by your friend, Captain Wicherly?"

As this question was flung at her, the girl still held the same statuelike pose. But

when the man's name was pronounced, she did the first truly spontaneous thing she had done since she entered the room—she settled forward in the chair in a dead faint.

IT IS hardly necessary to go into details as to the interview with Miss Dora Werth after she came out of her fainting fit.

The young woman appeared to feel that, by this show of weakness, she had compromised herself, and made virtual confession of the truth of the indictment the physician had pronounced. Indeed, she explicitly admitted this now. It will suffice to say that she corroborated the general outline of the story that Goodrich had presented as representing her actions the previous evening. She added numberless details, which did not modify the essentials.

But as regards the one salient question as to who fired the shot, she professed herself absolutely unable to give any information whatsoever. It was clear enough from the nature of her admission and from her tendency to become excited and even hysterical when this aspect of the question was presented that the girl at least feared that the shooting might have been done by the young man who had been named as her admirer, Captain Wicherly.

To be sure, she explicitly denied that this was possible, pointing out that she had accompanied Wicherly to the Pennsylvania Station, and had left him only a few minutes before he was to take the Philadelphia train. She had then come to Mr. Barthol's apartment, having first telephoned, for the purpose of a personal interview and for the exchange of letters, quite as Goodrich had asserted.

She was seated on the couch when the shot was fired. But the partially closed door had screened from view even the arm of the person who held the pistol. An instant after the terrifying report, the pistol had fallen at her feet.

She had leaped to her feet and rushed over to the prostrate man, in a natural effort to find out if he was badly injured. She felt at once that he was dead.

It was not more than twenty or thirty seconds before she came sufficiently to her senses to think of summoning aid. She had run into the dining-room and to the dining-room door, intending to go to the telephone

in the hall. Then it was that she found that door locked.

She had ultimately realized the horror and danger of her position, and had set to work to free herself, quite as Dr. Goodrich had declared. She gave full details of the effort to fish for the key with the string and bent hairpin. She failed utterly at first, but returned to the effort again and again. Finally she got the hairpin hooked in the loop at the end of the key, but for a time that did her no good. She fastened the string, so it would not fall out, and then, with another hairpin, she worked at the key through the keyhole, hoping to be able to turn and loosen it. She almost despaired of accomplishing this, and, indeed, gave up the effort again and again. Finally she thought of using some other implement, and she tried, with ultimate success, an oyster-fork that she found in the sideboard.

At last the key was loose in the keyhole, and she was able to push it out and pull it up over the transom with her improvised fishing-tackle.

Now she could unlock the door and open it, and she did so. She was on the point of going to the telephone when a new aspect of the matter presented itself. Some hours had elapsed since the shooting. Indeed, it was well toward morning. Suppose she were to summon aid and tell her story. What proof had she now that she had been locked in? Would it not be supposed that she had herself done the shooting and had waited all these hours before she could summon courage to make an outcry?

Moreover—and here she faltered a little and required a good deal of prompting—the thought had come to her also that perhaps the shooting had been done by some one whom she would not wish to implicate. It was not necessary to name that some one. Yes—this also after much prompting—yes; they had parted in anger there at the station. She had wanted him to take her with him to Philadelphia and marry her there. He had refused, saying that they would not steal away surreptitiously like that, but would gain his parents' consent and have an open wedding. She had said unkind things, and had ended by running away, leaving him there not so much angry as distressed.

She had even told him that she never wanted to see him again. She did not mean

it, of course. He must have known she did not mean it. But in her childish anger she had told him she was going back to some one who really cared for her. She had not thought of anything like that when she came here. She had only come to get the letters, and she meant to go away at once then, and never see Mr. Barthol again. She meant to telephone to Philadelphia in the morning.

And when morning came, she found herself in the closet by the outer door, waiting for people to begin moving in the building so that she could escape unobserved. She had decided to wait till the servants came in, and then slip out and trust to luck. She had gone down to the floor below—she would answer that question now—because she had done that a good many times before. And yes; she had placed the pistol in Barthol's hand, to make it look like suicide.

But they must not misunderstand. While she admitted that she did not see the person who fired the shot, did not hear him, even, yet they must not think that she supposed that even possibly it might have been Jack. She knew he had gone to Philadelphia. She knew that he had not turned and followed her and come to the apartment. They would find that some one—some one whom, doubtless, she did not know at all—had stolen in, or perhaps had been hiding in the apartment all along, and had seized the opportunity that her presence afforded to do the murder and escape.

Asked why she thought that that some one had locked the door—a maneuver which, when you came to think of it, would tend to exonerate the person who was left locked in—she found a ready answer. The murderer had not taken time to reason about the implications of the locked door, she suggested, but had acted on the idea that the locked door would make pursuit impossible for a time.

THIS post-syncope testimony of the now plaintively penitent blond beauty was reviewed by Webster and Goodrich, somewhat in the terms in which it has just been presented, as they sat at luncheon soon after the interview was ended, in the restaurant on the ground floor of the apartment-building. They were waiting the return of Captain Wicherly from Philadelphia, who, his sister had said, was to return

that afternoon, as well as reports of certain clues that were being followed by their assistants, to whom instructions had been given over the telephone. There was, naturally, but one topic of discussion, and in the course of it Webster spoke of one of Goodrich's inferences as showing remarkable "intuition."

"There is no such thing as intuition," Goodrich replied promptly. Then he thought a moment and added: "Or, if there is, it is never manifested except in infancy. Even then it is doubtful. Many of the acts that we commonly call 'intuitional' prove to be matters of early training."

"But surely," Webster demurred, "surely it was something akin to intuition that caused you to leave the room where Barthol's body lay, when we had been there but a few moments, and come out into the hall and go, almost on a run—so the policeman tells me—to the door, and out into the central hallway and down to the landing, and there discover the heel-prints, which we now know to have been made by Miss Werth, and which, even at that time, you ascribed to some one whom you correctly named to the elevator-boy as tall and blond."

The physician shook his head.

"There was no intuition about all that," he affirmed. "It was the result of a perfectly clear process of reasoning. I can readily describe to you every step of the process."

"Go to it," said the lawyer.

"OF COURSE I cannot go into full details, but we may note a few essentials. First, there was the observation made while I stood in the hall, just as I was about to enter the dining-room, that the transom window over the door was partly open, and that, in the particular light striking it, the marks of four fingers and a thumb were clearly visible, imprinted in the film of dust that accumulates on a transom window, even in a well-kept household. Inference: Some tall and probably slender person—for the disposition of the marks showed a hand with long fingers—has had recent occasion to open that transom. Natural inquiry: What can that occasion have been? Answer: Reserve judgment until further data are in hand.

"Observation from the other side of the door showed that the finger-marks on the transom were on the inside. Inference: The person who made the marks may have wished to get out of the room, but certainly did not wish to get in. But why try to get out through the transom? Presumably because the door is locked. *Ergo*, our tall person was locked in the dining-room.

"Now, there are many readily conceivable explanations that will fit in with these observations. I doubt whether I formed so definite a conclusion as that just presented on the instant. I possibly held the matter in abeyance and passed on into the little room beyond, where I got my first glimpse of Barthol's body. The policeman told me that some one had been shot, and nothing more.

"Before I had been twenty seconds in the room with Barthol's body, I had noted the bullet-hole in the desk over at the other side of the room and, caught in the ragged groove, the fragment of an ostrich feather, and near by a little filament of thread and several beads that could have come from no other place, probably, but a woman's bead bag. Then my eye caught the outline of a curious impression on the blotter that lay at the end of the desk—an impression that could have been made by nothing but the heel of a woman's shoe.

"Then I saw that the blotter-pad had a little bronze holder at each end, making the affair about sixteen inches long; and it flashed into my mind that I had noted scratches on both sides of the seat of a dining-room chair standing near the door, and that these scratches were fresh and just about as far apart as the ends of this blotting-pad.

"Well, I pieced everything together, and simply followed out quickly the lines of reasoning that any one to whom these data were presented would take. Ostrich feather in the groove must mean a woman's hat. Beads mean a woman's hand-bag. Heel-prints on blotter mean (together with marks on chair) that the woman who made the heel-prints put the blotter on the chair and stood on it while she fumbled the transom window and left her finger-prints there. Tall woman with long hands. Presumably the woman who had put the pistol in the man's hand—therefore, probably, a left-handed girl.

"Then, as I stepped toward the door, I saw a gilt hairpin lying on the couch. Only women with light hair wear light-colored hairpins—as a rule. So as I went along the hall, I was evolving the picture of a tall, left-handed blond woman with a white ostrich plume in her hat and a bead bag in her hand.

"As I passed the closet door, I paused just long enough to glance in to find that it was empty (I observed some tracks there when I had a chance to look more at leisure), and then went quickly through the outer door. I thought I saw some tracks at the head of the stairway, and I went down to the landing, and there, on the freshly scrubbed linoleum, the tracks were as plain as day. And I saw at a glance that the heel-print was apparently identical with the one on the blotter-pad."

THE attorney's face expressed the enthusiasm he felt.

"Great Scott!" he cried. "Call it reasoning or call it intuition—I will not quarrel about the term. It was a pretty piece of work, whatever you name it."

The physician responded quite seriously:

"Only what any one should have done who has had my experience. Perhaps not every one might do it as quickly, but a schoolboy could be trusted to follow up a simple line of reasoning like that, if you could get him to see the clues that were lying right before him." He reflected a moment and then added, "But the great difficulty is that most people do not use their eyes."

"Eyes do not count," affirmed the attorney. "It is the brain back of them that does what you have done."

"Well, I reckon that will be about enough on the subject of intuition," said the physician.

"Very well," the lawyer agreed; "but there are one or two aspects of the case that I would like to talk about a little more fully before we see our next witness. Particularly, I would like to know what opinion you have formed as to probable collusion between this Captain Wicherly who is coming and his sister. Does it strike you as probably just a coincidence that brother and sister should both have been there? Are you disposed to accept her statement that she was really in the closet while he passed, and that she did not actually see or at all recognize him?"

"Softly, softly," Goodrich cautioned. "You speak as if we knew positively that Captain Wicherly was there at all."

"Well, do you think there is any possible doubt about that? Isn't it pretty clear that after his sweetheart left him at the station he turned back and followed her, and then, in a jealous rage, took revenge upon the man who had previously been a friend of the girl's and to whom she had apparently returned?"

"The suggestion is plausible enough, surely; but if I were to attempt to demonstrate that proposition as an actuality, I should find need of a good deal of what you call 'intuition,' unsupported by reasoning. There are several gaps in the chain of observations and inferences."

"I admit that," the lawyer agreed. "But think how formidable a chain it is, in spite of the missing links!"

"No chain is formidable that has a single missing link," the physician corrected.

The lawyer laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

"I admit that, of course. If the link is really missing, the chain would bind nothing. But you know that there may be invisible links that are none the less in existence and in effective action. If we had to demonstrate the presence of every link in a chain of evidence, few cases would ever come to a satisfactory conclusion in a court of law. What we do is to demonstrate the existence of a certain number of links, and infer the rest. In the present case, we have the fond and jealous lover, quarreling with his sweetheart, and doubtlessly immediately regretting it. We have a perfectly plausible motive for the crime—in a paroxysm of jealous rage. We are told that Captain Wicherly is of short stature and right-handed—conforming to the traits of your hypothetical murderer. There is every probability that the military pistol is his. What more do you ask?"

"I ask a great deal more, I assure you," said the physician, with emphasis. Reflecting a moment, he added: "You recall that Miss Wicherly suggested that her brother might have loaned the pistol to Mr. Barthol. She even admitted—or, at least, did not deny—seeing it here last night."

"I was hardly disposed to take that part of her testimony seriously," said the lawyer. "Were you?"

"I accepted it with certain reservations.

But at least it is one of those items of apparent information that we shall do well to bear in mind. Conceivably Captain Wicherly can establish an alibi."

"I am not overlooking that fact, of course." The attorney looked at his watch as he spoke. "And apparently we shall be able to give him the opportunity very soon. He should be here in the course of the next ten or fifteen minutes."

WHEN Jack Wicherly came before the investigators there in the Barthol dining-room that afternoon, his appearance certainly was not calculated to make a favorable impression.

It was only too evident that he had been drinking heavily. Indeed, everything about his appearance suggested that he had "made a night of it." The detective who came with the young man reported that he had found him in his apartment on the bed, sleeping stuporously, fully attired. Just how or when he came there, Wicherly himself professed not to remember. Presumably he had come in some time during the night, too much under the influence of liquor to concern himself about the usual formalities incident to going to bed. He had been roused with difficulty, and, as he now appeared before the medical examiner and the lawyer, he still had the air of bewilderment.

The two men were struck instantly with the young man's resemblance to his sister. Captain Wicherly was not much taller than she was; his hair was of the same lusterless black; his eyes matched hers in color.

Notwithstanding his temporary disability, his gentle birth and admirable training was obvious enough in his manner of greeting. One might infer, doubtless correctly, that his present condition was due to an altogether exceptional departure from habits of sobriety.

The physician felt a momentary qualm about questioning a man in this state; but the ancient maxim: "*In vino veritas*," came into his mind, coupled with the reflection that he sought only to ascertain the truth. No injustice would be done, therefore, through continuing the investigation. Nevertheless, he made more emphatic than was his wont the warning assertion that anything the young man might say could be used subsequently against him.

Young Wicherly met this assertion with an appearance of profound astonishment.

"May be used against me?" the young man queried. "I do not understand. Have I done something foolish?"

"Any one who becomes intoxicated does something foolish, does he not?" the physician suggested.

"That's so, all right enough," Wicherly agreed. He seemed to make an effort to get himself in hand. "I reckon I must have done that from the way I feel. But I almost never did it before, and I don't remember much about it now." His face and manner suggested an effort to bring back memories of the recent experience.

"Where did you get your liquor?" asked the physician.

The young man put his hand to his head, and an expression of comprehension—a very painful comprehension, evidently—came over his face.

"I—I begin to remember something," he faltered. "I went into a place down the street there, not far from the station, and I must have got knock-out drops or something. You see, I went to Philadelphia." He paused, hesitated. "That is, I *was* going to Philadelphia." The expression was more puzzled than ever. "I don't know whether I went to Philadelphia or not—honestly, I don't. If I did, I don't know when I came back."

"You remember being at the station, do you not?"

"Yes; I do seem to remember that." The tone and manner suggested now a lack of frankness.

The physician frowned.

"You remember that very well, I think," he asserted. "And you remember that you were not alone at the station, do you not?"

The young man seemed to be roused to something like normal activity of mind. He sat erect, and for the first time had the appearance of being fully and keenly aware of the circumstances in which he found himself.

In an altogether changed tone of voice, he said abruptly:

"By the way, just what am I doing here? Have I done something while I was doped? I mean, am I accused of doing something? Or has something happened to Barthol?" He looked about him comprehendingly. "This is his apartment, isn't it?"

"I am glad to see you coming clearly to your senses, Wicherly," said the physician. "Important things have happened since you were at the Pennsylvania Station last evening. These things involve persons near and dear to you, including your sister and your sweetheart."

The effect of those words was striking. The young man leaned forward, his eyes fixed with startled intensity on the physician, his own face blanched.

"Good God!" he gasped.

There was absolute silence in the room for a time; and it was not broken until Goodrich chose to do so.

"Captain Wicherly," he finally said, "we are here in positions of authority. As I also told you, persons dear to you are compromised in a serious situation. You are indirectly involved beyond doubt, and some evidence has come to our attention that suggests direct involvement. For example, a military pistol belonging to you was used here last night to shoot a man, just beyond that door. Can you tell us anything as to how that pistol came to be here?"

"My pistol!" the young man gasped. "My pistol—shot a man here?"

The physician nodded.

"Do you remember anything about it?"

"My pistol?" The words came now with a questioning accent. "Why, I remember now that I dreamed about that pistol. I thought I was attacked and was wearing the pistol in the holster." He hesitated, paused, and went on: "Yes; I must have been in uniform, and I drew the pistol, and cried, 'Throw up your hands!' I remember that now." Another pause. An expression of anger, giving way almost instantly to doubt or solicitude. The narrator slowly shook his head. "I don't seem to remember what happened then," he concluded.

"Do you think this was a dream, or that it really happened?" Dr. Goodrich queried.

"Oh, it must have been just a dream. Of course it was. I haven't been in uniform and I haven't even seen the pistol since—I don't know when. It is hanging in the holster with the belt and uniform in my closet at home. I haven't thought of it in weeks before."

"Think again, Captain Wicherly," said the physician. "You are getting the cob-

webs out of your brain. Do you not remember loaning the pistol very recently to some one who was going on a vacation up in the Adirondacks?"

"No, indeed! I am very sure I have not loaned it. No one has asked me for it."

"You feel confident, then, that, if we were to go to your apartment, you would be able to show us the pistol there in the closet?"

"Why, yes; certainly."

"But suppose I were to tell you that your pistol is in this room at the present moment. Would you then be able to offer any explanation as to how it got here?"

The young man regarded his questioner with fixed attention for some moments, as if trying to get the import of the question. Then, with greater emphasis than he had placed on any words that he had spoken since the interview began, he said,

"None whatever."

Again there was almost oppressive silence in the room, broken presently by the even-toned voice of the physician saying:

"Partly to show you that I am not merely bandying words, and partly to help stimulate your memory, I will tell you that your pistol is in this room. It was used here last night to shoot a man. Now, I wish to ask you this very important question: Do you not remember coming to this apartment last night after you had quarreled with your sweetheart, Miss Dora Werth, and she had left you at the Pennsylvania Station?"

THE suddenly recurring color in the young man's face, the look of horror in his eyes, the involuntary gasp made verbal answer unnecessary. The words that finally came, in a barely audible tone were these:

"And if I did come here, what of that? I have been here often enough before."

"But not often in the mood of a lover who has followed his sweetheart to the apartment of another man," said the physician quietly. He stepped to the window and took up something from the little table there. He was turning, with the evident intention to show the pistol to its owner, when suddenly he stopped short and turned back to hold the weapon to the light. He examined it intently for several moments and then said quietly,

"Webster, will you look at this, please?"

As the lawyer came beside him, he indicated with his finger the thing that had caught his attention.

"I had not noticed this before," he said in an undertone. "The light happened to strike it just right. I want you to see it in position there just as I found it. It may be important."

"It doesn't suggest much to me," replied the other. "A little filament like that might catch on the safety-lever from almost anywhere, don't you think?"

"I think it may be the most important clue of any we have found," said the physician, with quiet emphasis. "Anyway, I wanted you to see it just as I found it, and you see me now remove it and place it on this microscope slide."

He adjusted a thin cover glass on the slide and wrote something carefully on the label.

"I will examine this under the lens in a moment," he said. "Meantime, I want to show the pistol to Captain Wicherly for identification, though the initials"—he indicated a little plate on the handle—"leave no question as to that."

The young man admitted ownership of the pistol without hesitancy or equivocation. He made no expression of wonderment at seeing it, but seemed absorbed in thought, his brows contracted, as if he were trying to look into the dark recesses of the brief but important period during which he seemed to have suffered a complete lapse of memory.

The physician now turned to his microscope, his interest seemingly centered on a new line of investigation. It remained for the attorney to endeavor to elicit further information from the young man who was, in his view, almost certainly the murderer. But he had little success.

THE net result of the interview, when it terminated half an hour later, was that Captain Wicherly admitted having a clear recollection of his quarrel with his sweetheart at the railway station, admitted also that he had followed her to the exit and afterward in a taxi-cab to the Barthol apartment.

He had seen Miss Werth get out of her taxi and thought of following her, but changed his mind on reflecting that this would be a very absurd proceeding.

"Did you know, or believe, that Miss Werth was coming to this apartment to see Mr. Barthol?"

"I thought of that possibility, but I hoped that she had gone instead to see a girl friend who has an apartment in this building down on the fifth floor. I did not want to make a fool of myself, so I went away—and did make a fool of myself after all," he added disconsolately.

"Are you ready to swear that you did not return a little later and come to this apartment?" asked the attorney, with menacing emphasis.

The answer came reluctantly, yet with the appearance of simplicity.

"How can I swear to that, when I have already told you that I have no recollection of what happened after I went into that place and began to drink."

Then the attorney chanced a question—based on a shrewd guess.

"Is it not true," he said, "that you have in your possession a key to the outside door of this apartment?"

The young man's expression showed that this question hit indeed a bull's-eye. For some moments he did not answer, and the color came and went, while his drawn features and staring eyes showed that he realized the appalling import of the question. At last he said,

"Yes; I have a key."

He went on to explain volubly that Mr. Barthol had once loaned him the key, one time last summer, when he was spending a week-end at the Barthol Long Island place—had loaned him the key, asking him to go to the apartment and get some golf-sticks and have them sent out to him. He meant to return the key, but had forgotten to do so when next he saw Barthol, and after that he had forgotten all about the matter.

"It was an unfortunate oversight for you and for Barthol," commented the attorney, with a sarcastic intonation. "It would appear that your subconscious mind had not forgotten about the possession of the key."

"Good God!" cried the young man, with every appearance of horror in voice and manner. "Do you believe that I could have come back here and used that key to enter the apartment and—and——"

The attorney was regarding him with a stern face, but there was a touch of pity in his voice as he said,

"I am so fully convinced of it that I have no alternative but to put you under arrest and have you taken into custody, and then take steps to have you indicted as the murderer of Leonard Barthol."

As the accused man was being sent from the room, Dr. Goodrich looked up from his microscope, beckoned the attorney to his side and said:

"If you don't mind, Webster, I think it would be a good idea to let Captain Wicherly be held where we can get in touch with him. I think it not unlikely I shall want to ask him a few more questions."

"Just as you like," assented the attorney. "He can stay there in the drawing-room under observation. This apartment is serving all the purposes of a jail at present, anyway. We have our suspects and material witnesses scattered now through all the rooms. If any new applicants appear, we shall have to find other quarters for them."

The attorney spoke facetiously. He was in good mood, as one is likely to be when events are developing as one could wish. From his standpoint, the elucidation of a more or less mysterious murder represents professional success. He was already running over in his mind the available items of evidence for presentation to the grand jury.

And in point of fact there seemed good measure of justification for his satisfaction. Starting out with obscure clues, observed only by the medical examiner, the case had developed within only a few hours to a stage at which it could reasonably be said that available evidence, if presented before a jury, would result in almost certain conviction. The murder-weapon had been traced to its owner; the owner himself had been shown to have a motive for the crime, and his presence in the immediate vicinity at about the time the crime was committed was established by his own confession.

It required no very active use of the imagination to picture the young man following Miss Werth into the building, coming to the door of the apartment almost immediately after she had been admitted by Barthol himself, using the key confessedly in his possession, coming stealthily down the hall, past the closet door where his sister was hiding, and, after perhaps seeing or hearing something that brought his jealous anger to white heat, gliding to the little passageway and thrusting the pistol

against the side of the victim, who was standing there pouring out a cocktail.

The accused man was just about as tall as the hypothetical murderer Dr. Goodrich had predicated; he was right-handed, in further accord with the physician's specifications. That he should have locked the dining-room door as he went out, thus leaving his sweetheart in a desperate predicament, seemed quite to accord with what might be supposed to be his sentiment toward her at the moment. That he should then have entered on a desperate debauch in the endeavor to attain forgetfulness of the horrible experience seemed an altogether natural culmination. Certainly, any jury would so regard it.

MEANTIME, the medical examiner's mind was working along different channels. After he had devoted a minute or so to the new specimen on the slide of his microscope, he had paused and written a few sentences on a prescription-blank. He had slipped the note into an envelope, and had stepped to the door and handed it to a policeman on guard in the hall, with instructions to see that it was sent immediately to the person addressed. After that, his further work with the microscope had been more or less perfunctory. He reexamined some of the earlier specimens, and had every appearance of being fully occupied. But in reality he was occupied not so much with the microscope as with a mental problem. He was weaving one of those extraordinary mental fabrics, with definite scientific clues for woof and common-sense inductions for warp—if the figure be permitted—which, under his manipulation, would come to have the solidity of a material substance.

For material he had the tangible clues gained by his own observation, combined with the testimony of successive witnesses. With this he was now visualizing the scenes of the night before in this apartment, and certain figures moved before his mental vision as vividly as if the whole thing were a play that he had seen enacted on the stage.

But not all the scenes that made up the play were quite so clear as that. It was as if now and again he had closed his eyes and failed to observe the development of the plot. During those intervals, some very salient actions might have taken place to change the entire conception of the drama.



What went before remained unmodified. What came after was vividly reproduced. But both prologue and sequel must be fitted into an intermediate scene—the vitally important scene of the actual shooting—in which one or another of at least four different characters, all principals in the play, might have had the leading rôle.

But when you have witnessed a play, missing one vital scene, you may perhaps have the gap in your knowledge supplied by a witness whose eyes were not closed. In the present case, Dr. Goodrich had got on the track of such a witness. The little filament that he had examined under the microscope, observation of which had led him to write the note, furnished, so he believed, the final definitive clue. All the evidence had led them—as the physician phrased it mentally—to erect a splendid arch which was, after all, no arch at all, because it lacked a keystone. The new observation would furnish the keystone. And he must wait the coming of the person to whom he had sent the note. In the mean time, he would spring a little surprise on his friends.

"Webster," he said, when the two were alone, "in the course of another hour or so I shall be able to tell you—or, at least, I hope

to be able to tell you—who committed this murder." He smiled blandly.

"But—Great Scott!" cried the attorney. "Do you mean to imply that I do not already know who did it?"

The physician looked up with an expression of well-simulated surprise.

"Of course," he said, with emphasis. "You don't pretend to think you know, do you?"

"I certainly do," replied the attorney. "If that young fellow is not the man, I'll agree to——"

"Softly, softly," interrupted the physician. "Make no rash promises."

"But, man alive, the whole case against the young man is built up on evidence that you have presented! All that will be necessary will be for you to go on the witness-stand and tell what you saw through the microscope, and these young women will tell what they know, and——"

"Just so. But the conclusion of your sentence is not what you intended it to be. For if I tell—as, of course, I shall be prepared to do—all that I have seen through the microscope, that young man would probably be much less in jeopardy than he appears to be at the present; and if the young women tell——" The physician paused, as if a new thought had come to him. "By the way,"



And now that there was total silence, Mrs. Barthol still did not move. Apparently she was lost in profound meditation.

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he said in an altered tone of voice, "might it not be a good idea for us to fill in the next hour or so—while I am waiting for some one—by having another little confab with each of the young women you have under guard? If you don't mind, suppose you send for Miss Wicherly."

WHEN Miss Wicherly appeared a few minutes later, she looked a shade more worn and anxious than she had during the earlier interview, but no less beautiful. Her nerves were under better control, largely, perhaps, because she had had a little time in which to call on her reserve fund of will-power.

"Miss Wicherly," said the physician, "you told us this morning that your brother had loaned his pistol to Mr. Barthol. Your brother himself, however, assures us that he has no recollection of any such transaction. How do you explain the discrepancy?"

The girl replied without a moment's hesitation:

"There is no actual discrepancy. I did not speak quite accurately when I said my brother had loaned the pistol. In point of fact, I brought the pistol to Mr. Barthol when I came here last evening. I did not speak to my brother about it. I had called at his studio, and I stayed there a little while after he had gone out. Then I happened to think about Mr. Barthol wanting the pistol; so I took it, meaning to tell Jack about it afterward."

"Where did you find the pistol?"

"I knew where it was kept. It was in the holster, hanging up in the closet where my brother keeps some of his clothing."

"Your brother is an artist, I believe. Has he, perhaps, in this same closet articles of wardrobe that he might use in costuming models or for some similar purpose?"

"No; only some suits of his own."

"Is there a fur coat or a fur-lined coat in the closet—or in the studio?"

"No; my brother has no such coat."

"And when you came here last night, bringing the pistol, what did you wear in the way of wraps?"

"Just the same coat that I wore this morning and a fox stole. They are in the other room there now."

The physician was silent for some moments. He had the appearance of one who hesitated to ask a question that is in his mind. Finally he said,

"Miss Wicherly, I believe you were in Europe during the war, and had some service as a canteen-worker and emergency nurse?" As the girl nodded assent, he continued, "Probably you learned there how to use a military pistol?"

The girl appeared to find the question disconcerting.

"Almost every one knows something about the use of a pistol," she answered.

"Not every one knows how to work a modern automatic," corrected the physician. "Do you happen to know how to cock the pistol and thus make it ready for action?"

The girl shrugged her shoulders.

"I do not profess to be an expert," she said candidly, "but I do know how to make a pistol harmless by moving the safety-clutch lever."

"Ah, that is the point I had in mind," said the physician. "What I chiefly wanted to ask was whether you looked at the safety-catch last night when you took the pistol from the holster and—I suppose—put it in your bag to bring it here. Do you remember?"

"I remember very distinctly," the girl affirmed. "I would not care to handle a pistol without first seeing that it was adjusted so that it could not be discharged accidentally."

"Did the safety-clutch appear to be in good working order?"

"Yes; it worked perfectly."

"What did Mr. Barthol do with the pistol when you gave it to him after you came here last night?"

"He put it on the sideboard, there at the farther end, near the door." The girl indicated with her hand. "It was still lying there when I came away."

The physician had risen and walked round the table and stood beside the sideboard.

"Any one who came through the room here would naturally see the pistol," he remarked. "If one happened to be angry with some one in the little den just beyond that door, one could snatch up the pistol, and in two steps could be where he could use it effectively. That, apparently, is just what some one did."

He turned and advanced a step or two toward the young woman. Then, after an impressive pause, he said,

"Miss Wicherly, who, in your opinion, was the person who came through the room and took up the pistol and fired that shot?"

The girl had apparently expected the question. She seemed to brace herself, her body stiffened, her hands clutched together tightly.

"How could I possibly know?" she answered. "I told you that I heard some one come by as I stood there in the closet, but I did not see who it was."

"So I recall," said the physician quietly. "But I wanted to make certain that you were not in a position to refute the testimony and evidence that have led my friend here, the prosecuting attorney, to conclude that this person—he who came so stealthily down the hall, past the door of the closet, came through this room, seized the pistol and committed the murder—was your brother, Captain Wicherly."

Again the girl's manner and appearance suggested that she had braced herself against an expected challenge or imputation. Without a moment's hesitation she responded,

"But my brother had gone to Philadelphia; therefore he cannot have been here."

"Your brother had planned to go to Philadelphia, but had not gone. By his own confession he went only as far as the station, and then, for certain reasons, turned back, and presently came to this building."

The girl's excitement was now obvious.

"Did my brother tell you that?" she demanded.

"He did. He admits that he followed his sweetheart from the station, and that he had a key with which he could let himself into this apartment."

The girl's appearance was that of extreme panic. Yet she made no movement, except to clutch and unclutch her hands.

"He did not say—he could not say—that he came here after—and used the pistol?" she demanded eagerly.

The physician shook his head.

"No; he does not explicitly admit that he remembers doing that. But he has been under the influence of some drug, and he does not remember all that happened by any manner or means."

The girl sprang to her feet now, and cried out eagerly:

"He could not remember doing that—for he did not do it! He did not come here.

No one came here except Dora Werth, and what I told you about a second person locking the door was not true. I myself was that second person. No one else was here."

And now the attorney was on his feet also.

"Do you mean to say," he cried, "that you did this thing? Are you confessing to this murder?" The girl cringed at the word, but she rallied bravely.

"I have no alternative," she said, "but to admit now that some one is falsely accused."

"Do you mean, then, that you brought the pistol here intending to shoot Mr. Barthol?"

"Oh, no; not that!" the girl cried. "I had no such thought when I came here. It was only when that other girl came and—and I realized that he was not true to me. Then I lost myself, and I hardly knew what I did. I just was—well, crazy with anger. I did not know what I was doing." She paused, settled slowly into the chair. "And, oh, I have been so unhappy ever since!" she moaned, as she covered her face with her hands.

HERE, then, was an utterly disconcerting development. The girl who had made the amazing confession was for a time in a condition closely bordering on hysteria; but when she rallied sufficiently to be questioned, she reaffirmed the confession with convincing—or, at least, elaborate—amplification of details. She avowed her willingness to sign a written confession, even professed an eagerness to accept whatever punishment might be meted out to her. In any event, she did not care to live now that the man she loved was dead.

"Curious the way these women have of showing their affection, isn't it?" said Webster in an undertone to his associate.

"Women are queer cattle," admitted the physician. "In which they are wonderfully like men." There was just the suspicion of a smile, or at least a suggestive twinkle of the eyes, accompanying the comment. "Webster, affairs appear to be developing. Suppose we let this young woman go back and call in Miss Werth. Possibly she will now have something of additional interest to tell us."

"I don't know that we need care much what she has to tell us after what we have heard. With a full confession in evidence,

the case appears to be closed. But let us see the young woman by all means."

"I have a sort of hunch that she will entertain us," said the physician cheerily.

To which the lawyer responded in sarcastic tones that to entertain people was the young woman's business.

The physician's "hunch" proved correct. The tall blonde, summoned for another interview, did indeed entertain her questioners, but quite differently from the way the lawyer probably had in mind. Under skilful guidance of the physician she was led to make several admissions that tended to reveal her conduct of the evening before in a somewhat less favorable light than that in which it had first been presented.

But the climax came when the physician told the girl that her lover, Captain Wicherly, had admitted following her from the station, and had been placed under arrest charged with the murder.

Then the girl did an astonishing thing. She sprang to her feet and, with a theatrical flourish and a toss of the head that made the wonderful mass of bobbed hair flow in billows about her face, she declared that her lover was absolutely innocent. She had told the story of some one coming and thrusting the pistol in at the door and firing the shot in order to shield herself, but now, since suspicion had been cast on another person, she would tell the truth. It was she herself who had fired the shot. She had acted in self-defense. She had not meant to kill him, only to frighten him, but the pistol was discharged while she held it, trying to keep him away, and he had fallen dead.

Physician and lawyer exchanged glances.

"Confusion worse confounded," muttered the attorney.

The physician addressed the girl casually.

"And then you went quietly out," he said, "and locked yourself in by turning the key in the dining-room door——"

The girl's confusion would have been ludicrous under less tragic circumstances. She gasped two or three times, and her big blue eyes widened to absurd dimensions. But her wits were working, and in a moment she explained:

"Oh, you mean what I told you about being locked in? Well, you see, I just made that up. I—I wasn't locked in at all."

To this the physician replied, in a non-committal tone, that it certainly was a rath-

er ingenious piece of invention. But, in an undertone to the lawyer, who had beckoned him aside, he added,

"Well, it is interesting, isn't it?"

"Interesting!" exclaimed the attorney. "Interesting! This murder case is developing into a farce-comedy. Are there any other people, do you suppose, who can come round and casually admit that they did the shooting?"

"Well, since you mention it," said the physician, "there is one other occupant of this improvised jail of yours who might possibly entertain us a little further."

"You mean the victim's wife, I suppose. Since you seem to be in facetious mood, perhaps you would suggest sending for her. You think, perhaps, she also will confess to being the murderer?" The tone was sarcastic. The attorney was distinctly out of humor.

"I think that she had more tangible and more compelling motives for doing the murder than any other of the persons whom we know to be involved in the crime," said the physician, speaking now quite seriously.

"Well, motives alone don't carry us far," growled the attorney. "And as Mrs. Barthol is known to have been out on Long Island, forty miles or so away, it doesn't seem likely that she fired the pistol, does it?"

"Suppose we call her in and see what she has to say about that," suggested the physician. "Or, no; suppose we go out and take a little walk in the park and talk things over a bit." He looked at his watch as he spoke; appeared to make a calculation, and added, "I shall be better prepared to have our little talk with Mrs. Barthol after, let us say, about another half-hour."

A FEW moments later, as the two men were passing through the drawing-room on their way out, Captain Wicherly accosted them.

"Gentlemen," he said, speaking with great deliberation and manifestly controlling his voice with an effort, "gentlemen, I have been thinking the matter over, and I begin to remember things that I could not recall when I talked with you. And there were some things that I do recall that I did not tell you. I realize now that by keeping silent I am involving persons who are innocent. I cannot and will not do that. I wish to tell you that what you have charged is

absolutely true. I followed Miss Werth here last night, and let myself in with the key and went back there and shot that man with the pistol, just as you said I did. And no one else had anything whatever to do with the crime. I alone did it, and I am ready to take my medicine."

The attorney was on the point of abrupt speech, but the physician raised his hand and besought silence.

"All right, Captain Wicherly," he said. "A little later we will take your full confession, if it seems necessary. Just now we have another matter in hand." And, beckoning the attorney to follow him, he went out, leaving the third self-confessed murderer of Mr. Barthol gazing after them in blank astonishment.

FOR perhaps fifteen or twenty minutes the men walked along a path near the border of Central Park, and no word was spoken about the case.

It was a splendid day for the season, clear and windless, just cold enough to make sunshine agreeable. The leaves had mostly fallen, giving clearer views of the wooded vistas. One could see flocks of ducks and a swan or two in the lake.

Once or twice the physician paused to watch the antics of a nuthatch creeping with abrupt, erratic, machinelike motion about the trunk of an elm.

"Odd how he seems to defy gravitation," he commented, as one of the gray-mantled, black-capped midgets went creeping along the under side of a big horizontal limb.

"Perhaps he has heard about Einstein and knows that gravitation is out of fashion," laughed the attorney.

The physician regarded his companion with an expression of boyish amusement that was likely to forecast some unexpected philosophical comment.

"Does it occur to you, Webster," he said presently, "that you and I, in our capacity of official sleuths, are just now more or less in the position of that nuthatch—seeing our world upside down?"

"I don't quite get you."

"The point is simply that, under normal conditions, we have to do with suspects who are probably guilty and who deny their guilt; but now we have to do with a bunch of suspects who prove themselves innocent by admitting their guilt."

The attorney did not appear to find the explanation illuminative.

"All of which is just about as clear as Einstein," he commented ironically.

"Let us sit down on this bench here in the sun, where we can breathe in a good lot of ozone to keep our brains fresh, while we examine our paradox and see if we can make our world turn right side up—as the nuthatch does when he wanders round to the upper side of the limb," suggested the physician, eying his companion amusedly.

The lawyer readily assented, and the physician launched at once into what he facetiously described as a disquisition on relativity.

"There is nothing new about the fundamental idea of relativity, is there?" he demanded, and then immediately supplied the answer by pointing out that he himself, in common with other youths of his generation, had been brought up on Herbert Spencer's famous essay on the relativity of knowledge.

"Nothing ever helped me more," he stated, speaking very earnestly. "I find that the fundamental idea about the relativity of knowledge—the conception that we cannot know anything in its entirety, that all knowledge is contingent on some other item of knowledge, that we never can be *absolutely* sure—is of the utmost value in its application to affairs of every-day life. Einstein would appear to have carried the idea to its ultimate goal. Others have appeared to concede that certain fundamental concepts of time and space must be admitted as absolutely true. He challenges these concepts along with all the others. Let us see how the idea of relativity applies to the little human drama the observation of which happens to be the task of this particular day for you and me."

"That is precisely *the* aspect of the problem of relativity that interests me at the moment," said the attorney emphatically. "And I am particularly interested to hear you elucidate the proposition that you have just made—to the effect that our suspects have proved themselves innocent by declaring themselves guilty."

The physician had crossed his knee, and was leaning back complacently, with folded arms.

"Let us get directly down to cases," he said. "Let us consider our suspects individually and collectively; and at the outset

ask ourselves why they were led to make their respective confessions. I will put it in the form of a question: Why, in your opinion, did Miss Wicherly confess that she shot Barthol?"

"I think it fairly easy to answer that," replied the attorney. "Or, at least; it would be easy, if we had not the other conflicting confessions to consider."

"Suppose we forgot those others for the moment and take up each confession by itself. I should like to have you tell me how each one would strike you if it had been presented as a unique confession. What about Miss Wicherly?"

"She strikes me as an intelligent, conscientious sort of girl, with a well-developed sense of duty and great affection for her brother. The early interview seemed to bring this out, and it was obvious enough that she was greatly moved when the suggestion was made that her brother might have done the thing. And when she learned, at our second interview, that her brother was actually charged with the crime, the elemental sense of justice that is very strong in women, combined with affection for her brother, brought her instantly to the conclusion that the only thing to do was to confess what she had done."

The physician nodded.

"In a word, then," he said, "Miss Wicherly confessed in order to save her brother. Very well; let it go at that for the moment. Why did Miss Werth confess?"

"**N**OW we begin to get into complications," said the attorney, frowning. "It was all plain sailing when we had just one confession. But now comes along this other girl and declares that she did the shooting. I admit myself simply stumped by that."

"Of course," said the physician cheerily. "That is what gives our world the upside-down effect we were talking about. But what I am suggesting is that you tell me how each confession would strike you if you were to consider it independently—how it would strike the jury, let us say. For the moment we are through with Miss Wicherly. Let us assume that she has not confessed at all, and that now Miss Werth comes forward and attempts to clear up the case for us by admitting that she held the pistol which, in a scuffle, was discharged accidentally, killing her friend. Considering

all the circumstances just as we know them—or as far as we think we know them—what would be your explanation of the girl's reason for making this confession just when she did?"

"With that qualification," said the attorney a little dubiously, "I think we can answer the question rather satisfactorily. Dora is very much in love with Captain Wicherly. She also is intelligent, and, like every other woman, she has a profound underlying sense of duty and abiding spirit of altruism—however it may be obscured at any given moment. I am practically quoting you as to this; so I know you agree. Well, to make the application, Dora saw that her lover was compromised, charged with the crime and by way of going to jail; she realized instantly that the only way she could save him was by telling the truth. So she blurted out a confession."

"She didn't exactly blurt it out," corrected the physician. "She weighed her words pretty carefully. You doubtless recall that she made a story that, if told to a jury, would probably result in her acquittal on the ground of self-defense. However, let that go for the moment. The essential thing is that she did confess, and that, according to your own interpretation, she was led to make the confession in order to save her lover, Captain Wicherly. Now, it remains only to explain why Captain Wicherly himself confessed, considering his confession as if no other had been made."

"That is precisely the difficulty," objected the attorney. "One can't consider it independently, because one knows about the other confession. That problem of relativity of yours comes in."

The physician laughed.

"As a lawyer, you ought not to be troubled by that. Half of your time is occupied in trying to make a jury see one side of the problem and forget that there is another side. Just imagine yourself in court, and assume that the judge has ruled out all the evidence relating to a confession by Miss Werth or Miss Wicherly. There remains only one suspect, Captain Wicherly, and he has stepped forward and confessed that he did the murder. You wish to make it clear to the jury why the young man has ceased to deny his guilt and has been led to confess. What is your explanation?"

"On that basis," said the lawyer, "I can

explain it readily enough. It is quite clear that the young man confessed because he realized that his sweetheart was compromised by the very fact of her presence. He thought the only way to save her from the humiliation of arrest and perhaps ultimate conviction was to acknowledge what he had done."

"Bravo!" cried the physician. "You have explained the situation just as I expected you to, and, indeed, in what seems a simple and logical way. Briefly, Miss Wicherly and Miss Werth confessed in order to save Captain Wicherly, and he confessed in order to save Miss Werth. So far so good. But now we are confronted with the practical aspect of our problem of relativity. So long as you consider each confession independently, you are dealing with something that seems a simple and elemental and, if you wish, an absolute truth. Miss Wicherly shot Barthol—and there you are! Miss Werth shot Barthol—again there you are! Captain Wicherly shot Barthol—yet again there you are! Each statement, taken by itself, is quite conclusive. Of course the law does not permit the jury to give a verdict of murder in the first degree on the mere confession of the criminal; but in each of these cases we could find corroborative evidence, and three separate juries, each hearing only one confession, with the corroborative evidence that you could readily supply, would bring in verdicts of 'guilty as charged in the indictment.' But if the verdict is just in one case, it must be wrong in the other two cases."

"Quite so," muttered the attorney. "That is where we are up a tree."

"Up a tree, and on the under side of the limb upside down," admitted the physician. "In other words, that is where our problem in relativity comes in. But after all, as we have seen, it is an easy thing for the nut-hatch to run round the limb and come to the upper side, and in so doing put his topsyturvy world to rights. And I think we can solve our little problem in relativity quite as easily."

"I am glad to hear you say you think so," muttered the attorney sarcastically. "Go ahead and run round the limb. I am watching."

"Very well. How does this strike your mental vision? Holding to each and all of the interpretations you have just given as

to the motives for confession of the three suspects, suppose we shift our mental view in this wise: You have suggested to your hypothetical jury that Miss Wicherly, wishing to save her brother, and knowing him to be innocent, confesses the truth that she fired the fatal shot. Suppose we merely paraphrase this statement by saying that Miss Wicherly, believing her brother to be *guilty* and wishing to save him, confesses *falsely* that she fired the fatal shot. Make the same interpretation in the case of Miss Werth. She believes Captain Wicherly to be *guilty* and she wishes to save him, and so she *falsely* admits her own guilt. And, passing on to the captain, we find, from our altered view-point, that he believes Miss Werth to be *guilty* and he wishes to save her, and so he *falsely* admits that he did the shooting."

"Jerusalem!" murmured the attorney. "I begin to see where we are landing."

"We are landing on the upper side of the limb, heads erect; and our problem of relativity has shown us that each of the three self-confessed murderers is innocent, inasmuch as the two women think the man guilty and the man thinks one of the women guilty—which, in the very nature of the statement, implies that no one of the three is guilty. The three confessions taken together thus eliminate the three suspects, proving further, I may add, that, in addition to being themselves innocent, no one of them knows who the guilty person may be."

THE physician was now smiling broadly, evidently amused at the effect of his disquisition.

"Nice little demonstration of the value of relativity, isn't it?" he queried presently.

When Webster is very much puzzled, he has a way of caressing his right eyebrow. The present occasion appeared to be one calling for this maneuver.

"Relativity be hanged!" he said presently. "If your psychology is right, then all our work so far to-day, following up all your lovely clues, has led us precisely nowhere."

The physician's amusement was even more in evidence than before.

"'Psychology' is such a big word!" he demurred. "Let us fall back on old-fashioned 'common sense.' Basing our case on that, do you not think I am right?"

"I would like to think about it a while,"

declared the attorney. "I hate to think we have followed up a lot of splendid clues, proved them correct, run the criminals to earth, got three of them to confess—and then must admit that we are right where we started and know nothing about the crime."

"Well, if I had to admit anything like that, I shouldn't care much for it, either," concurred the physician. "But who made any such concession? I shall prove to you very soon that your description does not apply at all to the kind of world I see from the perch on top of the limb. But before we come to that, I want to back up the common-sense interpretation I have just made by proving to you in a more direct way that no one of our three confessees—if there isn't such a word, there should be—is guilty of the crime confessed."

"You claim to be able to prove this directly?"

"By such evidence as you accept in court as being direct and demonstrative. The testimony of eye-witnesses, in short," declared the physician.

"You mean that you can produce an eye-witness to the crime?" The tone expressed frank incredulity.

"Not quite that. I can prove to you just when the crime was committed, and then, by the testimony of eye-witnesses, prove that two at least of the suspects were nowhere near the Barthol residence at the time of the murder. The third suspect was present, it is true, but I shall readily convince you that she did not do the shooting. Nor, for that matter, does she know who did it."

AS THE physician spoke, he was opening a little hand-bag he had brought from the apartment. A moment later he held a gold watch in the palm of his hand, with the face toward his companion.

"Just what time do you read by the face of that watch, Webster?" he asked.

"Four minutes after one. What about it?"

"That happens to be precisely the time at which the murder took place."

"I hear you saying that; but how do you prove it? I had supposed that the thing was done much earlier."

"How could you suppose that, when we have Mrs. Barthol's testimony, supported by that of the telephone operator, that Bar-

thol responded to the telephone-call at one o'clock?"

The attorney grinned rather sheepishly.

"Ah, for the moment I had forgotten that," he admitted.

"It is a very important thing to remember," said the physician quietly. "You overlooked it because, at the moment, you were thinking about the more recent testimony of Miss Wicherly as to the second person who came down the hall while she was hiding in the closet. Your thought was that this person did the shooting and did it pretty soon after entering the room. There lurked in your mind the recollection that Miss Wicherly fixed the time at not long after nine o'clock. But doubtless you recall that she said nothing about hearing any pistol-shots—that is to say, during our first interview, when she was telling the truth."

"Do you mean to say, then," queried the lawyer, "that the person who came in at that time waited there for four hours—from nine until one—before he did the shooting?"

"No; I mean to say that he neither waited there four hours nor did the shooting at all. He could not have done the shooting had he wished to, for there was nothing there to shoot with."

"But hold on!" cried the attorney. "Miss Wicherly admitted that she brought the pistol and left it there on the sideboard."

"She admitted what was not true. She had not brought the pistol, and it was not in the apartment until a good while after she left. Nor was it on the sideboard at all."

The attorney regarded his companion with an expression mingling amazement and incredulity.

"You talk as if you thought you knew all about this case," he commented presently.

"I do," affirmed the physician, with a shrug of his shoulders, meant to imply that that much should have been taken for granted. "I shall demonstrate that to your entire satisfaction very soon. But at the moment I am content to prove one or two preliminaries. First, about the matter of the time when the crime was committed."

As he spoke, he turned the watch over in the palm of his hand and held up its back for inspection. The gold case showed a groove, into which one might lay a lead-pencil, cutting from the center across one side, deep enough to reveal ragged disks and

broken cog-wheels of the inner mechanism, but not involving the face.

"Behold the path of the murder-bullet!" said the physician, pointing. "This watch was in Barthol's vest pocket, just over his heart. The bullet, as I told you, was fired from the victim's left side. You see how it cut through this watch and stopped it forever, just as it stopped the heart beating under it. Now you know why I am sure that the murder took place at four minutes after one."

Webster examined the watch curiously.

"Mighty interesting," he commented. "That tells us when the murder was done, without a doubt. Incidentally, it suggests that Dora was making rather a long call. Apparently the exchange of those packages of letters gave opportunity for some bartering. But how do you know that Miss Wicherly and her brother were not there also?"

"By the testimony of the elevator-man and the hall-man, who told me that Miss Wicherly and her brother came down in the elevator and left the building, not together, but at an interval of only a few minutes, soon after nine o'clock, and the testimony of Miss Wicherly's maid that her mistress returned to her own apartment before ten o'clock and at once retired for the night."

"But how do you know," broke in the attorney, "that young Wicherly did not return at a later hour?"

"I WAS coming to that," said the elevator-man at Wicherly's apartment reports that he was brought home by two of his friends in a taxi and assisted to his studio at a few minutes before midnight. The elevator-man reports, and the two friends who were with Wicherly confirm the testimony, that the young man was in no condition to go out again. He was, in short, stuporously intoxicated, and perhaps drugged into the bargain. It is certain that he never got off the bed where his friends left him until the officer we sent after him this morning took him into custody."

The attorney reflected for some time before he said:

"But, in heaven's name, if you knew this, why did you bother to go on with those bogus investigations? Why waste time——"

"Softly, softly. We were not wasting time. We were getting direct testimony

from people who were present not long before the crime was committed—people associated with the crime by clues of the most unmistakable character. I thought we should learn something by letting these people talk. And see what we did learn! Even while testifying falsely, they cleared themselves and one another, and thus simplified our task of bringing the crime home to the actual murderer."

The attorney waved his hand impatiently.

"The actual murderer!" he exclaimed.

"The actual murderer! Now you have said something. But what do we know about the actual murderer if all the people that might have done the murder are proved innocent?" He hesitated a moment. "By the way," he added, "there is still Miss Dora Werth to be considered. By her own admission, she was there when the shot was fired."

"By one of her own admissions, she herself fired the shot," said the physician, smiling. "But by combining the methods of Einstein and the nuthatch, we appear to have shown that we cannot accept that part of her testimony."

"But your argument from relativity might be wrong."

"Almost any argument might be wrong," admitted the physician. "In the present case, however, my argument appears to hold for two out of three individuals involved, as collateral evidence has shown. As to the third, I admit that the circumstances are different, for Dora undoubtedly was there at the time when the shot was fired, and several hours afterward."

"How do you prove, then, that she did not fire the shot?"

"There are several ways in which I can prove it. The most satisfactory of these will consist of showing who did do the shooting. Meantime, however, I ask you two questions. First, where did Miss Dora get the pistol with which the shooting was done? Second, how came she to be locked in the dining-room?"

"But, according to her last statement, she was not locked in," countered the attorney.

"She made that claim when she found herself cornered after she had falsely confessed doing the shooting. In point of fact, she was locked in. However, I shall be able to present direct testimony as to that a little later, if I am not mistaken."

The physician consulted his watch.

"Within a half-hour or so," he said, "I hope to have the statement of the person who locked the door."

"Which means, I suppose, the person who did the shooting?" queried the attorney.

"Precisely so. Suppose we wander back to the apartment now."

WHEN the two men reentered the Barthol apartment, they came in through the kitchen entrance, and thus avoided passing through the drawing-room.

They saw no one but two maids in the kitchen and a policeman at the door until they had traversed the length of the hall and were almost at the dining-room entrance. Then the young woman generally known as Dr. Goodrich's secretary, but known to Webster also as an official assistant of the Department of Justice, came out of Mrs. Barthol's room and closed the door.

"Ah, Miss Cooper, how is our patient getting on?" asked the physician.

"Just as you predicted, Doctor."

"She is nervous and apprehensive—feels as if something dreadful was about to happen?"

The girl nodded.

"She says she has a frightful sciatica—she is subject to it."

"What about the pupils of her eyes? Are they beginning to dilate pretty well?"

"Yes; they are much larger than they were, but they are not yet up to normal."

"Very well," said the physician. "Give her the hypodermic injection at once, and tell her I shall see her pretty soon."

A moment later, in the dining-room, the physician had placed his little hand-bag on the table and was pacing slowly back and forth.

"These are sad cases, Webster," he said.

"As you may have guessed, we have to do with a morphine addict. You heard what I asked Miss Cooper and noticed her responses. The patient has had no morphine since early this morning, and she is beginning to feel the imperative need of it. I had Miss Cooper tend to her, because she has had experience with these cases. I noticed the contracted pupils this morning, and the little needle-scars in the left arm. I withheld the drug to make sure, but now our patient will be herself in ten minutes or so, and our remaining duties can be performed in short order."

Mazie Marshall appeared at the dining-room door, trim of figure and alert of manner as always. The physician regarded her expectantly.

"Well, Mazie, what about it?" he asked.

"She left Oyster Bay at eight o'clock and did not return. She was at the studio from half-past nine until nearly eleven, and she had an envelope with her when she came out."

"And she wore a moleskin coat?" asked the physician, with as near an approach to eagerness as his voice usually assumes.

The girl nodded.

"Yes; she wore a moleskin coat, and a hat to match."

"Thank you, Mazie," said the physician.

"I merely wanted to make absolutely sure."

He was speaking with animation now, yet his face had taken on that expression of sadness which Mazie Marshall remembered to have seen on two or three occasions when the medical examiner had brought an investigation to a conclusion—when, one might suppose, he would have been elated instead. In a low voice he said:

"Webster, I think we are ready to see our patient now. Perhaps you had better come with us, Mazie. Miriam may need your co-operation," he explained, as he led the way from the room.

They found Mrs. Barthol attired in the neatest of blue-silk negligees with collar and belt of gold filigree lace. She had caught up her hair hastily, but with dainty effectiveness, and fastened it with a jeweled comb. Her eyes were wide-irised and sparkling as she came forward to meet her guests with subdued cordiality.

"I must apologize for making such a scene," she said, in a soft, pleasing voice.

"But I was really in very great pain. Your medicine acted like magic, doctor."

The physician regarded her gravely.

"It was not my medicine, but your own," he commented very quietly. "I merely gave you, with your own hypodermic syringe, a tablet that you would have given yourself long before had it been available."

For an instant the woman's manner changed.

"So it was you who took it," she said, her voice raised a trifle. Then she seemed to think better of what she was about to say, for she ended with a little laugh. "Never mind, so long as I have it back now," she concluded.

The young woman had seated herself in a chair, and now regarded her guests with an air of expectancy. Goodrich stood directly in front of her at a little distance. His face clearly showed how distasteful he found the rôle he was being called on to play.

"Mrs. Barthol," he said presently, "your husband was killed last night in the little room beyond the dining-room."

The woman started, raised her head, regarded the speaker as if with surprise.

"Ah, yes," she said presently. "It is very sad. Have you been able to find the—to find the person who did it?"

"That is what I wish to speak to you about," said the physician. "I will tell you exactly how the murder took place. A woman wearing your moleskin coat left the station at Oyster Bay last night at about half-past eight and came to New York. She went to a building on Fortieth Street and spent an hour or two in a studio to which she had a key. When she came away from there, she brought a pistol which she had taken from a holster hanging in a closet. She put the pistol into a manila envelope, and subsequently wrapped a newspaper about it. She came to this house and through the basement entrance, and walked up the stairway so that she was not seen by the hall-man or elevator-boy. She came into this apartment through the servants' entrance into the kitchen, and—unheralded and unheard—crossed the hall and entered this very room."

"She took the pistol from the wrappings and threw the envelope and newspaper into a waste-basket there by the door, failing to notice the telltale creases in the envelope where it had pressed against the barrel of the weapon."

"About an hour later, under stimulus of drugs she had taken, and perhaps enraged by the sound of laughter and general hilarity, she took the pistol and went quietly back through the dining-room and stood in the passageway between that room and the little room, and thrust the pistol quickly forward against your husband's side and shot him dead. Then she ran back, locking the dining-room door after her, and reentered this room, and remained here till morning."

All this was spoken very quietly. Meantime, the woman who was addressed

continued to sit in the chair in an attitude of attention, her head turned a little to one side, lips slightly parted, eyes half closed.

"I come now to perhaps the most remarkable part of the story," the physician continued, after a momentary pause. "The woman who had done this amazing thing remained in this room, as I have said, until morning. She was still here when the servants came and discovered Mr. Barthol's body, and when the policeman came, and when I came. But no one suspected her presence, because that door into the hall was locked, and no one had the key. Probably they would not have thought of opening the door, in any event, of a room they supposed to be vacant. But the woman who was here went to that telephone on the little table at the head of your couch at about half-past seven this morning, and took off the receiver and asked for a number. And strangely enough, the number she asked for was that of this apartment-house."

ANOTHER pause. Then, in an explanatory tone,

"This telephone has a direct wire and a different number from the apartment-house number—has it not?"

Mrs. Barthol nodded. The physician went on:

"And then when the operator in the hall below responded, the woman asked for Mr. Barthol's apartment. Then this woman—sitting there on your couch—held a conversation with the person who answered the 'phone out there in the hall, and I will tell you just what she said. 'I would like to speak to Mr. Barthol,' she began. And the person who answered her replied: 'Mr. Barthol can not come to the 'phone. Who is speaking?' And the woman—sitting almost where you now sit, you understand—the woman answered: 'This is Mrs. Barthol. I am speaking from Oyster Bay. I wanted to say to Mr. Barthol that I am coming into town to-day. I am just starting for the train. I will be there before ten o'clock.'"

A long pause, during which Dr. Goodrich still stood immobile, his arms folded, his eyes fixed sadly, pityingly on the woman, who, for her part, was no less immobile, her eyes fixed steadily on his, her face now as pale as death.

"Something over two hours later," Dr. Goodrich continued, "the woman who had sent that strange message from this room put on a fur coat—not the moleskin, this time—and a hat, and, watching an opportunity when there was no one in the hall, slipped out of that door and across the hall and the kitchen, which then was empty, and through the rear door into the central hall. She walked quickly along the hall and round the corner to the front door, as if she had just come from the elevator. Encountering a policeman who stood by the hall door, she expressed astonishment, inquired what had happened, and on being told that no one could enter, she declared, with agitation: 'But this is my home. I have just come from the country. I am Mrs. Barthol.' A moment later she came into the reception-room, where Mr. Webster and I were waiting."

Webster had listened with amazement to the latter part of this discourse. He interrupted the physician.

"Do you mean to imply," he demanded, "that Mrs. Barthol did all this? You mean that she was here last night, and that it was from this room that she telephoned to her husband—he being out there in the hall—at one o'clock this morning?"

"Just that," said the physician quietly. "She also telephoned from here at seven-thirty this morning, as I have just stated, saying then, as before, that she was talking from Oyster Bay. I should not have known the truth about this, however, in all probability, if I had not found the dated newspaper in the waste-basket there by the door this morning. It was to-day's paper, and could not have been on the news-stands earlier than about eleven last night. That told me the room had been visited when it was supposed to be locked and unoccupied. But it did not at the moment occur to me that Mrs. Barthol herself had been the visitor. I took it for granted that she had spent the night at Oyster Bay, as she told us. It was not till a little later that I began to put two and two together—particularly after I found the moleskin hair caught in the safety-lock of the pistol. I knew that Mrs. Barthol had a moleskin coat, for I had seen the coat itself hanging in the closet over there when we first looked into the room this morning, while Mrs. Barthol—as

you remember—was back at the telephone."

The attorney was nodding his head.

"I see it all now," he said. "There was the dated newspaper here, the moleskin coat that left the hair on the pistol, and the private-wire telephone back in the alcove behind the curtains, where you could talk without being heard by any one out in the hall when the hall door was closed. Simple enough, now that you have explained it. But it was a wonderful piece of induction, all the same." He paused a moment, and his face expressed the amazement that he felt. "And that certainly was *some* alibi," he asserted. "A phony alibi, if you will; but *some* alibi all the same—*some* alibi!" he reiterated.

THE lawyer was looking intently at Mrs. Barthol now, and perhaps he was not more amazed at the disclosures than at the way the woman responded—or failed to respond. Except that she was pale as death and that her breathing was deep and perhaps a little rapid, there was nothing to indicate that the words she heard had any import beyond the ordinary.

And now that there was total silence, she still did not move. Apparently she was lost in profound meditation.

When finally she did speak, her words were as unexpected—to the lawyer, at any rate—as the manner of their pronouncing was anomalous.

She raised her head a little, made a slight gesture, and in a tone as casual as if she were commenting on the weather, she said,

"Well, he got what was coming to him. didn't he?"

And afterward, as they were taking her away, charged with murder and making no denial, her only comment was to urge Dr. Goodrich to give directions that she should have her regular dose of narcotics. There was a touch of emotion in her voice as she made this plea. But when she went out of the door in custody of the officers a few moments later, she was as unperturbed as if going for an ordinary evening's entertainment.

She had been assured that morphine would be provided to meet her needs, and apparently she now felt entirely at peace with the world.

Soup and Fish

You Don't Have to Go to Desert Islands for Adventure. There's Plenty of It in New York, for the Visitor Especially. Here's a Young Man Who Knows

By George F. Worts

DRAINED of its limousines and pretty legs, Fifth Avenue looms naked, lonesome and magnificent, an empty theatre of granite and marble and brooding plate glass. There is mystery in the air. The street-lamps beam upon a long black mirror, and the traffic-lenses blink from white to red to green like a changing display of huge Oriental gems, now a diamond, then a ruby, now an emerald.

You see the glimmer of metal spots in vertical rows down a side street, and presently these materialize into a wary young Irishman who swings a nasty night-stick. Other uniforms, some gray, some olive, saunter meaningly before iron-barred granite and sandstone castles that an army could not enter without bombarding.

Almost anything, you feel, can happen in such a setting, but—it must be in key, a little mysterious, a little romantic, a little sad. To the historian, a slim figure in lavender which dances down the broad empty sidewalk has all the possibilities that a beautiful new germ has to a scientist.

The family name of this lavender atom makes little difference; it never does. Her given name happens to be Violet—Vi for short. And this is the story of Vi the nameless, Vi the shameless, the wistful, the terrible.

Hesitating in her sprightly career, she was gazing lovingly upon a display of stockings in a shop that deals in absolutely nothing but stockings. The lights in that window never go out. She was arrested by a pair of highly clocked chiffon tubelings priced naively at two hundred and fifty

dollars the—not the gross, not even the dozen, but—the pair!

The ogre of the Avenue—the horribly impersonal spirit that deals only in the nameless—marked her at that instant as Victim No. 202,808.

For the attention of a young man from the West had been arrested also. A fine-looking fellow, tan and pink of cheek, red-lipped, big-mouthed, big-nosed—bigger all round than the casual clothing customer. He stared at the stocking display with a seriousness that rapidly became alarming.

His soft gray hat was cocked over one ear, and the light-gray coat he wore blew wide of him in the breeze; and the girl in lavender was almost overcome by the splendor beneath. He was wearing a dress suit beautifully tailored, and his bosom glowed with the snowy brilliance of a brand-new flying jib. He savored slightly, though not unpleasantly, of synthetic-gin cock-tails.

Violet's eyes ran up to his, and she couldn't resist a smile, fleet and dimpling.

"Thank you!" the young man cried, grinning a little uncertainly. "Thank you, little gold-digger! You're the first girl who's given me a smile since I hit this cold-shouldered old burg of yours."

Violet seemed inclined at first to resent the freedom of this remark. Her pale cheeks became angrily pink, but her eyes decided to twinkle.

"That's the one redeeming feature of us—gold-diggers," she retorted sweetly. "We can give the out-of-town man a grin without hurting our reputations a bit; he goes on his way rejoicing, and it doesn't cost anybody

a cent. Men hate to be neglected, even by perfect strangers."

There was a fine edge in her voice, like a razor sliding along in the dark, but the young man from the West did not sense his peril. Her amiable philosophy had roused him to thought, and he gazed at her with moist curiosity. She was surprisingly faultless. A cool-looking lavender dress trimmed at the neck with point lace, slim silver-gray ankles and slippers to match. Her bobbed black hair was shingled boyishly up the back, and it stood out in a quaint and becoming little shock under her silver toque. Her face had the innocence of a lamb—a young lamb—and her dark-blue eyes could probably tell more lies in a minute than he could forget in a week.

"I'm dead, flat, busted broke," he announced sternly, then tossed his head drolly. "But I have a lovely disposition."

"That counts," she agreed. Whether she was angry with him or not it would be hard to say—her kind can conceal emotions so cunningly, you know. Her dark-blue eyes had become wistful. She was no longer looking him in the face but in the splendid shirt-bosom, the studs in which were pearls, small but genuine.

"So I guess I better travel." With that he abruptly started across the sidewalk. It had been raining until a few minutes ago, a gentle, late-summer shower. The pavement was black and glossy. The young man from the West wore new shoes, and when new shoes come unguardedly in contact with a filmy emulsion of oil and water on asphalt, something is likely to happen.

IT DID. In one amazing, Gargantuan step, he slithered out upon Fifth Avenue, swayed, teetered, spun half about and fell flat on the snowy shirt-bosom.

The young Irishman who swung the nasty night-stick happened at this critical moment to emerge from the side street.

The young man in the beautiful dress suit lay still, as if stunned.

Violet analyzed the situation, clearly perceived its rudiments, and ran to him.

"Stand up!" she pleaded. "Stand up!" She tried to pull him up, but it was like trying to lift the pavement itself.

He compromised by sitting up and rubbing a streak of oil and brown water across his forehead.

"Didn't I tell you," he said in reprimanding tones, "that I am dead broke? You're fishing in the wrong pond."

"You're going to be pinched! You're going to be pinched! You're going to be pinched!" she sang frantically.

A golden taxi-cab bounded down upon them like an enormous ripe orange. Violet flagged it madly with both hands.

"Get in! Get in!"

He sat there stubbornly—or wisely.

The taxi had stopped abreast of them, and the driver obligingly dismounted, seized the victim of synthetic gin and slippery asphalt by the arms and shoved him into the back seat.

Violet jumped in lightly beside him. The young Irishman was sprinting toward them.

"Where to?" said the amiable driver.

"Where to?" Violet prompted.

"Baffin Bay," the young man responded, with a deep sigh.

"Where is that?" the driver asked.

"Don't ask me," groaned the victim.

"Where is it?" the driver repeated.

"It's in Europe!" Violet squealed. "Drive over to Lexington! Step on it!"

"I get you, kid." Their amiable chauffeur winked at her, and the vehicle jerked into motion.

Violet shook her capture by the arm.

He didn't, he announced cheerfully, care where they went. He wasn't a bit afraid. Then he began to laugh in a soft, irritating fashion. He was laughing, he explained presently, because the joke was on her; and it was such a whale of a joke!

"Go on," Violet encouraged him.

On his entire person, he stated, there existed the sum of exactly one dollar. She could help him spend it any way she wanted to.

"Let's blow it all in," Violet suggested recklessly, "on a lot of strong black coffee. It may help your memory."

"My memory," he informed her, "is as clear as a bell. That dollar is every cent I've got."

Violet had opened the door on her side.

"Drive us to that little Greek quick lunch on Lexington," she directed.

"And I'll stick around," her captive promised, "until every cent of that dollar is gone."

"Do you remember yet," she asked coldly, "what hotel you are stopping at?"

"Never mind what hotel I'm stopping at," he said cannily. "I'll get there all right."

He threw his arm suddenly about her shoulders, pulled her away from the window and tried to kiss her mouth. Violet ducked, and the kiss landed somewhere on her silver toque. She wiggled violently, pushed his arm away, and retired with angry murmurs to her own corner.

Her muscular companion spoke in an injured voice. Didn't she like him? What was the matter? What was she sore about?

Violet told him he was drunk.

"And broke," he added.

"Well, you've said so often enough," she agreed. She, too, spoke in an injured voice, and she seemed a little frightened as well, huddling down in her corner. If this strong and impetuous young man should become unmanageable—

They had stopped before the Greek quick lunch. The windows were dim with the steam of the recent rain and the vapor from the perennial coffee-urn inside, and a pallid lemon light shone through.

When he was seated across from her at a little oak table against the wall, he studied Violet's eager young face with a troubled expression. His shirt-bosom, once so snowy, was now stained with a great wet, dark blob.

"How did you get this way, anyhow?" he asked presently.

"What way?" she replied innocently.

"Oh, never mind. You're mighty well preserved; I'll tell the world that!"

"You have to be in this town."

"How old are you, anyhow—seventeen or thirty?"

"Neither," she said coldly.

"What's your name?"

"Violet."

"Violet what?"

"Just plain Violet. Anything else?"

NOW, the young man from the West was not asking these questions impertinently. He was simply interested and investigative, as all young men ought to be. He knew the kind of girl he was dealing with—or was dealing with him—and it was a man's privilege to ask that kind of girl such questions. It has been for a good many thousand years.

"You're a pretty good-looking kid," he decided. And he looked at her again, quite

cordially. Violet cowered back a little; she was probably thinking of that husky left arm that had all but cracked several of her ribs. It was really fortunate for her, as long as he happened to be of the volcanic type, that the young man from the West was the kind of man he was. He was so easy to identify—the son of a fine, clean Mid-Western family. That look was stamped upon him. His father was probably a banker or a leading merchant in Terre Haute or St. Paul or somewhere; and the boy was here to take in the new shows, attend to a little business for the old man, kick up his heels a bit, sow a wild oat or two. He no doubt considered that he was sowing them rather wildly now. Does that give you a clearer idea of him—a big, strapping, good-looking fellow, out having a little adventure with one of the big city's demurely plumed birds of prey—an adventure that the crowd back home would simply eat up when he related it?

He leaned toward Violet confidently.

"Now, look here, sweet," he said; "you know I've got just seventy cents left. Where do you come in? How do you expect to cash in? You're playing a brand-span new one on me. Come on!" He grinned engagingly. "Tell dada!"

Violet wrenched her eyes away from the genuine pearl studs and lifted them with questioning innocence to his.

"Where did you learn about women?" she inquired. "Out of a book?"

"You've got the most beautiful, heavenly blue eyes I ever saw in my life," he declared. "Your mouth was made to be kissed and kissed and kissed! My golly, Vi, but you're adorable!"

Vi started at that moment to leave the table. He reached out and clutched one of her escaping hands.

"Sit—down!" he said sternly. "S'down! The show hasn't begun. The party is still in its cradle. I was joshing about being broke. I've a five-spot left. See? Looky!" He fished round in an interior pocket of the gray coat, brought out a crumpled five-dollar bill. "Now will you stick around?"

Vi sank down again, with the corners of the mouth that was made to be kissed and kissed and kissed drooping.

"I'd rather go home; I'm tired," she said wearily, nursing the fingers of the hand he had grabbed.

"Aw, don't be a kill-sport, Vi! Hey—waiter!"

A young bandit appeared from the recesses of the restaurant. It was a rule in this place—waiters did not impose their presences upon you at this small hour until their services were called for.

"Waiter," said the young man, "we want something to drink. Something with a kick. You got something?"

The bandit gazed thoughtfully through the window and back to the five-dollar bill.

"Coitney. Two?"

"None of that stuff for me," Vi spoke up promptly. "Bring me a cup of tea. Bring oolong if you've got it. I—I wish," she said to her escort, "you wouldn't, either. You're pretty nearly sobered up now. You don't know what you're drinking in these places."

"This is first-class stuff," the bandit confided. "Canada."

"Bring two, anyhow," the young man from the West commanded.

And when the waiter had gone, he said in puzzled tones:

"I don't get you, Vi. Scared I might get rambunctious?"

"I hate the stuff," she said bitterly. "My dad died of it."

He eyed her solicitously.

"That's tough."

The drinks were placed before them—vile, honey-colored stuff in coffee-cups.

"Sure you won't have one?"

"No," she said sullenly.

He drank them both—a gulp apiece—grimacing fearfully after each.

"Spar-varnish. Set 'em up again. Aw, Vi—stick—a-round," he pleaded, and seized her arm as she again started to go. "I'm going to begin shooting off Roman candles in a second. That stuff isn't five minutes old."

ITS action, at least, was prompt. The young man from the West tossed off the next two cups and threw the empty cups smashing against the wall. He began to sing. He sang in a rich, deep bass, keeping time with his fists on the table. He finished what he could remember of "Madelon" and sat down.

The bandit awaited his opportunity. When the young man stood up to sing again, he propelled him to the door in a rush that carried him half-way across the sidewalk. He pushed Violet violently between

the shoulder-blades as she followed, sent her tripping to the curbstone, gasping and furious. Then the bandit locked the door and turned out the lights.

Violet started across Lexington regardless of mud puddles. She was crying angrily.

Heavy, muscular hands jerked her back to the sidewalk, drew her irresistibly a step at a time into a dark doorway.

The young man from the West was breathing heavily. He folded both arms about her, crushed her until a sob of pain was squeezed out of her and she stopped struggling. He kissed her hotly on the mouth again—and again. Then he loosened her, but he still gripped her frail shoulders. He shook her.

"What are you all the time running away for?" he growled.

The situation was rapidly being jerked out of Violet's hands. He was shaking her so that her teeth rattled and her silver toque tossed about like a tiny boat in a gale.

"Let me g-g-go," she panted, "you—you big bully!"

His hands relaxed.

"Gee, but you're a funny girl! What is your game, Vi?" His voice was becoming thicker. "Look here, honey; stop jilting me this way. I was spoofing about being busted. Look—look at this, Vi!" Then, from the same productive inner pocket that had given up the dollar bill and the five-dollar bill, the young imbecile took out a roll of money. His fingers, long as they were, could not encompass it. He returned it to his pocket.

"Now will you play pretty?"

"Oh, gosh, gosh, gosh!" said Violet.

"Kinda glad you found me, Vi?"

"How much is it?"

"Never you mind how much is it," he bade her gruffly. "Not going to try any more runaways now, are you?"

"N-no."

His voice had become thicker and gruffer. He was pawing her shoulders and sagging against the wall with a sickly smile. And suddenly—suddenly the poor fellow stopped pawing and sagged completely. He slipped down and down until his shoulders rested on the damp sidewalk, and the street-lamp across the way shone palely upon a young face gone ghastly gray. You certainly cannot tell what you're drinking in New York nowadays.

Presently a tall black taxi-cab with flickering oil side-lights came tottering along and Violet, with the help of the driver, got her victim aboard.

DAWN was breaking when the young man from the West returned to his senses in a chill and unfamiliar environment. A dingy little gray room; a hall door with the veneer popping loose; a pin-point of a gas-jet shedding reluctant and jumpy illumination upon a lopsided bureau.

The room swam sickeningly when he tried to sit up, and his head was beating madly. But he was sufficiently clear-witted to realize what had happened. What a fool! What a whopping, sap-headed, weak-kneed idiot he had been! Violet! And he had thought his stomach to be an affair of galvanized iron! Violet! Trimmed properly by a baby-eyed slip of a girl! What a soft mark he had been! His nerves were jangling like sleigh-bells. *What* would he tell his sister? The bulk of their spending-money gone! This story wasn't going to go so well with the bunch back home, after all. It would join the list of the thousand and one untold tales.

Then he caught sight of a drooping gray garment and a round object above it attached in some manner to the hall door. Gently, in order not to arouse his giddy nervous system more than necessary, he crept from the bed to the door. His coat—his hat!

He pulled the coat around and fumbled for the sacred inner pocket. A voice, soft and sleepy, spoke to him. A rifle-shot could not have surprised him more.

"You will find every dollar of it there."

He spun about. He had not noticed that a figure was slumped down in a chair at the courtyard window, where the cold, dismal light of morning was sifting down.

"You'll find every dollar of it there," Violet repeated drowsily, for she was not fully awake.

He withdrew the roll of money from the coat and replaced it mechanically. Then he sat down heavily on the bed and absently fingered his pearl studs.

"They're there, too," Violet assured him. She sat up and stifled a little yawn, and looked over at him dully. "You better get out of here now. The landlady would put me out on the sidewalk if——"

"Hold on, hold—on!" The young man

stopped her, and his expression was one of acute bewilderment. "This—this— My golly!" He rubbed his eyes and ponderously shook his head. "Say—you're the girl who picked me out of the middle of Fifth Avenue last night, aren't you?" Details of her were vague, but he could see enough—the shock of dark bobbed hair, the lavender dress, the silver stockings and slippers—"Sure you are!"

He sprang up and went over to her.

"Look here, Violet," he said huskily; "I'm an awful fool, I am. I don't know *anything*—and I thought I was awful clever last night. What—what a *lucky* fool I was!" He scratched his head and frowned. "But why did you do it—a girl like you?"

Vi was looking up at him almost tenderly—he was such a fine, frank fellow!

"Well, if I hadn't," she began simply, "some one else would have. They'd have got all your money, and your watch and studs. Oh, you needn't apologize for what you did. I guess it was my fault. I'd just come from the movies and—they must have made me kind of reckless." She sat up straight and finished rapidly, "I never met a man in such a—an outlandish way before in my life."

"Violet," he said sternly, looking down at her from out of his really handsome dark eyes, bloodshot though they were, "what—what—how do you earn your living?"

"I'm a dressmaker."

"A dressmaker!" he repeated. "Well, you—you little *wonder*!" Then he gazed about him at the shabby gray room.

"You know what I'm going to do?" he demanded. "You showed me what a fine scout you are. Now *I'm* going to make good on my end of it." He went to the gray overcoat and came back with the roll of bills. "I'm going to split the whole wad with you—and I can thank my lucky stars you weren't somebody else, or I wouldn't have the chance!"

Violet had started to her feet. She huddled against the window-casing and her eyes were frightened.

"No, no, no, no! Not a penny! I won't take it! No!"

His head and shoulders sagged. He looked from the roll of bills in his palm to Violet and back to the roll of bills.

"Great Scott, Violet," he pleaded, "I don't want to be a short sport! You've got

to let me do something. What *can* I do?"

"Nothing. Not a thing. You better go. It's getting light. She gets up terribly early."

"I'm not going away from here," he told her firmly, "until you tell me how I can square up for all you've done for me. I'll go then. You must want something."

Violet's head came up slowly. Her lips were parted in a wistful, half-ashamed smile, and her eyes were resting on his stained and rumpled shirt-bosom.

"You—you'll think it's terrible," she whispered.

"Name it," he begged. "Please, Violet!"

Violet avoided his ardent young eyes; and it came out in a tumble of words. She had never, never since she had been in New York, been in one of the great, famous restaurants. All of her money had had to go into presentable clothes, and, the way she had to live, it was impossible to meet the kind of people she really wanted to know. By "people" she naturally, being a woman, meant men, but she said "people." She had never in her life known a man who owned a dress suit—the right kind of man, at least. Would he really do that for her?

"I mean, would you take me to one of the famous restaurants, where they have orchestras and dancing and—and wear your dress suit?" He started eagerly to interrupt, but she rushed on almost in terror. "You—you wouldn't be ashamed of me, really! I have a lovely dinner dress that I made myself. It's never been worn. It's stunning. It's the most beautiful thing you ever saw!"

She stopped with that. Her blue eyes were glowing and her lips were parted breathlessly. The canniness of last night seemed to have slipped from her like a disguise. It was so easy to realize how she had dreamed and dreamed of this opportunity, how she and her beautiful dinner gown and some Prince Charming in a splendid dress suit would be made to assemble themselves somehow some day in delicious, swooning reality.

"Oh, you dear, dear, dear!" the young man from the West was babbling. "Will I? Do you know what we'll do? I'll rent a limousine—by golly! I will! Not a taxicab, but a limousine! And I'll drive up here to-morrow in state—that is, to-night. And

we'll go to the doggiest and highway-robberiest place in this town. You wear your evening gown, and I'll have on the old soup and fish. And if you like, we'll go to a show—and a roof afterward. We'll do it up brown, we will! What's the address of this place? Write it down. What time shall I call? Six-thirty?"

"Oh, beautiful!" Violet caroled. "I'll be ready at six-thirty. Oh, it's so nice of you!" There were big tears of happiness in her eyes. She was so excited she could hardly hold the pencil in her hand.

He got into his coat and stuffed the address into a vest pocket. In the doorway he held up his hat in a commanding gesture.

"Six-thirty sharp," he whispered. "I'll try to thank you then with soup and fish—and a big thick steak. Good-night—I mean, good-morning!"

OUT in the street, the young man from the West squinted painfully into a rising red sun. It made his head ache worse than ever. Painful pulses throbbed behind his eyes. He felt weak and trembly. All about him were dingy brownstone houses with bulging fronts, relics of a bygone day. They reminded him of stodgy, genteel old men with fraying cuffs and collars.

He crept wearily away from the spot, found that he had lost himself, and asked a policeman the way to Fifth Avenue. Here he stopped a very late—or very early—taxi, and slept all the way to his hotel.

He tiptoed into the suite he and his sister were occupying, undressed by slothful stages and scattered his clothing upon several chairs. Hours ago the ogre of the Avenue—the horribly impersonal spirit that deals so cruelly with the nameless—had numbered poor Violet as a victim.

The fair-haired, beautiful sister of the young man from the West stepped softly into his bedroom. He was snoring.

Her clear, fine eyes fell on the rumpled sections of the dress suit. It would have to be sent to the hotel valet immediately. She gathered up the garments and searched the pockets. A fragment of paper with some memorandum or other scrawled hastily in pencil was all that she found. It wouldn't be important, of course. So she tore the scrap of paper into little bits and dropped them out of the window.

Back to Methuselah

Is the Sorry Muddle We Make of Things Caused by the Fact That the Span of Human Life Is Not Overlong? The Great Irish Philosopher-Dramatist Shows Just How Far He Believes Will-Power Can Go to Make Spirit Triumph Over Matter

By George Bernard Shaw

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IN THE preface to "Back to Methuselah," Shaw tells that, twenty years ago, in "Man and Superman," he took the legend of Don Juan and made of it a dramatic parable of creative evolution. "But," he says, "being then at the height of my invention and comedic talent, I decorated it too brilliantly and lavishly. I now find myself inspired to make a second legend of creative evolution without distractions and embellishments. My sands are running out. . . . I abandon the legend of Don Juan with its erotic associations, and go back to the legend of the Garden of Eden."

In this "philosophic fantasy," as the Theatre Guild calls it, which is really a thesis in dramatic form, Shaw sets forth his scientific, political and religious creed—"the beginning of a bible for creative evolution."

"Back to Methuselah" opens in the Garden of Eden. Shaw has set the date at 4004 B.C. Adam and Eve are in their first wonderment; no ideas are yet born which in the days to come are to worry and limit man. Before them is an interminable eternity together, which can only be destroyed by accident. Already the thought of it has begun to pall on Adam, and at times he is broody and difficult.

The Serpent soon teaches these two a vocabulary—birth, death, miracles, imagina-

tion, conception. She whispers to Eve the secret of creation as told her by Lilith—the mother of all life.

THE SERPENT: You imagine what you desire; you will what you imagine, and at last you create what you will.

EVE: How can I create out of nothing?

THE SERPENT: Everything must have been created out of nothing. Look at that thick roll of hard flesh on your strong arm. That was not always there; you could not climb a tree when I first saw you. But you willed and tried and willed and tried, and your will created out of nothing the roll on your arm until you had your desire, and could draw yourself up with one hand and seat yourself on the bough that was above your head. I, too, willed to renew myself as two instead of one; and after many days the miracle happened, and I burst from my skin with another snake interlaced with me. And now there are two imaginations, two desires, two wills to create with.

EVE: To desire, to imagine, to will to create! That is too long a story. Find me one word for it all—you, who are so clever at words.

THE SERPENT: In one word: to conceive. That is the word that means both the beginning in imagination and the end in creation.

So, in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve learn what it is to live and what it is to die,

what it is to be happy, to be jealous, to fear. But knowledge had destroyed their peace.

ADAM (*angrily*): How can I help brooding when the future has become uncertain? Anything is better than uncertainty. Life has become uncertain. Love is uncertain. Have you a word for this new misery?

THE SERPENT: Fear. Fear. Fear.

ADAM: Have you a remedy for it?

THE SERPENT: Yes. Hope. Hope. Hope.

ADAM: What is hope?

THE SERPENT: As long as you do not know the future, you do not know that it will not be happier than the past. That is hope.

ADAM: It does not console me. Fear is stronger in me than hope. I must have certainty. Give it to me, or I will kill you when next I catch you asleep.

Eve protests at the danger to her beautiful pet.

ADAM: Fear will drive me to anything. The Serpent gave me fear. Let it now give me certainty or go in fear of me.

Accepting the counsel of *The Serpent*, Adam binds the future by his will. He vows to live a thousand years, and then to die and take his rest.

THE SERPENT: I make no vows. I take my chance.

ADAM: Chance? What does that mean?

THE SERPENT: It means that I fear certainty as you fear uncertainty. It means that nothing is certain but uncertainty. If I bind the future, I bind my will. If I bind my will, I strangle creation.

EVE: Creation must not be strangled. I tell you I will create, though I tear myself to pieces in the act.

Several centuries pass, and the second act finds the first parents in Mesopotamia. They have lost their youth and grace, but they are still strong.

Murder has come into the world by the hand of Cain. He is the rampant individualist, the inventor of bloodshed—the man who is himself to the bent of his selfish power. He is contemptuous of his father, delving his way through an eternity.

CAIN: I am the first murderer; you are only the first man. Anybody could be the first man; it is as easy as to be the first cabbage. To be the first murderer one must be a man of spirit.

EVE: If you, Cain, had had the trouble of making Abel, or had had to make another man to replace him when he was gone, you would not have killed him; you would have risked your own life to save his. That is why there is enmity between woman, the creator, and man, the destroyer. I know you; I am your mother. You are idle; you are selfish. It is long and hard and painful to create life; it is short and easy to steal the life others have made. When you dug, you made the earth live and bring forth, as I live and bring forth. It was for that that Lilith set you free from the travail of women, not for theft and murder.

Cain scorns this philosophy. He turns to Adam.

CAIN: I revolt against the day. I revolt against the food. You say it gives strength; does it not also turn into filth and smite us with disease? I revolt against these births that you and mother are so proud of. They drag us down to the level of the beasts. If that is to be the last thing, as it has been the first, let mankind perish. Stay with the woman who gives you children; I will go to the woman who gives me dreams. Grope in the ground for your food; I will bring it from the skies with my arrows, or strike it down as it roams the earth in the pride of its life.

EVE: You are a poor, silly creature, after all. Do you think I had never had these thoughts? I—who have the drudgery of preparing the food. I thought for a moment that perhaps this strong, brave son of mine who could imagine something better, and could desire what he imagined, might also be able to will what he desired until he created it. And all that comes of it is that he wants to be a bear.

HAVING hammered in the golden text of his religion, Shaw, in the second play of the cycle, "The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas," shows the obstacles that block the path of advancement. The ordinary span of life is far too short a time in which to accomplish anything, he says.

HASLAM: Now I come to think of it, old Methuselah must have had to think twice before he took on anything for life. If I thought I was going to live nine hundred and sixty years, I don't think I should stay in the Church.

FRANKLYN BARNABAS: If men lived even a



Scene from Act II,
Part I. *Adam*
(George Gaul), the
delver, and *Eve*
(Ernita Lascelles),
the spinner, in *Me-*
sopotomia, several
centuries after the
Creation.



(Left) *Napoleon*
(George Gaul), in-
troduced into Part
IV, "The Tragedy
of an Elderly Gen-
tleman." Time,
3000 A.D.



(Right) *The Elderly Gentleman*
(Albert Bruning)
made up to re-
semble the author
of "Back to Me-
thuselah."

Photographs by Bruguiera.

third of that time, the Church would be very different from the thing it is.

CONRAD BARNABAS: If I could count nine hundred and sixty years, I could make myself a real biologist, instead of what I am now, a child trying to walk. Are you sure you might not become a good clergyman if you had a few centuries to do it in?

Lloyd George and Asquith are introduced into this episode thinly disguised as *Joyce Burge* and *Lubin*, and the brothers tell them their theory.

CONRAD: We're not blaming you; you hadn't lived long enough to prevent it [the world war]. No more had we. Can't you see that threescore and ten, though it may be long enough for a very crude sort of village life, isn't long enough for a complicated civilization like ours? Flinders Petrie has counted nine attempts at civilization made by people exactly like us; and every one of them failed just as ours is failing. They failed because the citizens and statesmen died of old age or overeating before they had grown out of schoolboy games and savage sports and cigars and champagne. The signs of the end are always the same: democracy, socialism and votes for women. We shall go to smash within the lifetime of men now living unless we recognize that we must live longer.

The politicians see that this theory, while crazy, may be an excellent thing to offer to their constituents, a new fad. It does not occur to them that, should the life-force work in the manner suggested by the *Brothers Barnabas*, it would be outside the control of the Conservative, Liberal or Coalition parties.

LUBIN: Tut, tut, Mr. Barnabas; I am a very patient man. But will you tell me what earthly use or interest there is in a conclusion that cannot be realized? I grant you that if we could live three hundred years we should all be perhaps wiser, certainly older. You will grant me in return, I hope, that if the sky fell we should all catch larks. Although I am a mere child of sixty-nine, I am old enough to have lost the habit of crying for the moon.

BURGE (*hesitating*): Look here! I took sour milk twice a day until Metchnikoff died. He thought it would keep him alive forever; and he died of it.

CONRAD (*with a gesture of despair*): What's the use of going on, Frank? Because

I am a doctor, and because they think I have a bottle to give them that will make them live forever, they are listening to me for the first time with their mouths open and their eyes shut. That's their notion of science.

Shaw takes a fling at opportunist politics.

BURGE: Good God! Here is this professor—a man utterly removed from the turmoil of our political life, devoted to pure learning in its most abstract phase; and I solemnly declare he is the greatest politician, the most inspired party leader in the kingdom. I take off my hat to him. I, Joyce Burge, give him best. And you (*to LUBIN*) can see nothing in it!

CONRAD: Hello! What have I done to deserve this tribute?

BURGE: Done? You have put the Liberal Party into power for the next thirty years, Doctor; that's what you've done. (*Later, to LUBIN*) You really think the electorate would swallow it?

LUBIN: My dear Burge, is there anything the electorate will not swallow if it is judiciously put to them?

The *Brothers Barnabas* despair at getting serious consideration for their theory. They see in its reception by *Burge* and *Lubin* how every one will accept or deny it according as it suits or fails to suit his convenience.

FRANKLYN: We may be quite sure of one thing. We shall not be let alone. The force behind evolution, call it what you will, is determined to solve the problem of civilization, and if it cannot do it through us, it will produce some more capable agents. Man is not God's last word; God can still create. If you cannot do His work, He will produce some being who can.

SAVVY (*FRANKLYN'S daughter, an interested listener*): Imagine a girl living at home with her mother and on her father for three hundred years! They'd murder her if she didn't murder them first.

LUBIN: By the way, Barnabas, is your daughter to keep her good looks all the time?

FRANKLYN: Will it matter? Can you conceive the most hardened flirt going on flirting for three centuries? At the end of half the time we shall hardly notice whether it is a woman or a man we are speaking to.

Burge and *Lubin* leave, *Burge* bubbling with pleasure over having found a new way to get votes, and a new election slogan—"Back to Methuselah!"



Scene from Part V, "As Far as Thought Can Reach." Here in the year 31,920, A.D., Shaw shows the ultimate development of his idea of evolution by force of will. (Left to right) *Strephon* (Dennis King), *The Newly Born* (Martha Bryant Allan) and *Acis* (Walter Abel).



(Left to right) *Lubin* (Claude King) and *Joyce Burge* (A. P. Kaye), Shavian paraphrases of Asquith and Lloyd George in Part II. Time, the Present.

Everybody's Magazine, June, 1922

CONRAD: Well, that's how the gospel of the Brothers Barnabas is going to be received. But creative evolution doesn't stop while people are laughing. Laughing may even lubricate its job.

SAVVY: What does that mean?

CONRAD: It means that the first man to live three hundred years mayn't have the slightest notion that he is going to do it and may be the loudest laughter of the lot.

IN THE third part, "The Thing Happens," the time is 2170 A.D. Two of the characters, *Mrs. Lulestring*, and the *Archbishop of York*, are in their third century of life, but they are lonely in a changing world, and they find contact with the immature folk about them unsatisfying and wearisome. Their bodies have not aged. They have the appearance of people still in their prime. When they reveal themselves to their associates as long-livers, the short-livers speculate as to whether, after all, they care to live so long, the complications are so frightful. Yes; frightful, Shaw admits, if institutions remain the same. But they won't. Even the British, he believes, would grow up intellectually if given three hundred years to do it in. They would no longer have to have Scots, Chinamen and negroes to steer their government. For now, in 2170 A.D., *Confucius* is the chief secretary. He steadies the wheel while the president of the British Isles, *Burge-Lubin* (a composite of *Burge* and *Lubin* of the previous episode), an irresponsible child of thirty-odd, plays marine golf and amuses himself by a long-distance affair with his minister of Health, a beautiful negress.

THE ARCHBISHOP: I tell you, what is wrong with us is that we are a non-adult race; and the Irish and the Scots, and the "niggers" and the "chinks," as you call them, though their lifetime is as short as ours, or shorter, do yet somehow contrive to grow up a little before they die. We die in boyhood. The maturity that should make us the greatest of all nations lies beyond the grave for us. Either we shall go under as graybeards with golf-clubs in our hands or we must will to live longer.

Shaw here, as one who reads his autobiographical preface will understand, is throwing a challenge to the materialistic scientist; he is championing the spirit, which might calculate in terms of eternity if it so willed.

Confucius sees perils ahead if the ages of *Mrs. Lulestring* and the *Archbishop* become generally known.

CONFUCIUS: Every mortal man and woman in the community will begin to count on living for three centuries. Things will happen which you do not foresee—terrible things. The family will dissolve; parents and children will be no longer the old and the young. Brothers and sisters will meet as strangers after a hundred years' separation; the ties of blood will lose their innocence. The imaginations of men, let loose over the possibilities of three centuries of life, will drive them mad and wreck human society. This discovery must be kept a dead secret.

But he also sees the futility of trying to interfere with the life-force. The long-livers will marry and propagate a long-lived race. *Confucius* thinks that there must be many others besides *Mrs. Lulestring* and the *Archbishop*.

CONFUCIUS: Nothing that we can do will stop it. We cannot in our souls really want to stop it. The vital force that has produced this change would paralyze our opposition to it if we were mad enough to oppose. But we will not oppose. You and I may be of the elect, too.

Here the Puckish spirit in Shaw reasserts itself, and he frivols a bit with the possible effect of life-extension on romantic impulse.

Burge-Lubin has arranged to visit the alluring negress who is his minister of Health. She is two hundred miles away.

BURGE-LUBIN: *Confucius*, I have some important business at Fishguard. The Irish air service can drop me in the bay by parachute. I suppose it's quite safe.

CONFUCIUS: Nothing is quite safe. The air service is as safe as any other traveling service. The parachute is safe. But the water is not safe.

BURGE-LUBIN: Why? They will give me an unsinkable tunic, won't they?

CONFUCIUS: You will not sink; but the sea is very cold. You may get rheumatism for life.

BURGE-LUBIN: For life! That settles it. I won't risk it.

CONFUCIUS: Good! You have at last become prudent. You are no longer what you call a sportsman; you are a sensible coward, almost a grown-up man. I congratulate you.

BURGE-LUBIN (*resolutely*): Coward or no coward, I will not face an eternity of rheumatism for any woman that ever was born. I am going home.

THE fourth play "The Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman," takes place in the year 3000 A.D. The place is Galway Bay on the Irish coast. Ireland is now the home of the race of long-livers which has sprung up. The British Commonwealth has moved eastward, and Bagdad is its capital.

To Ireland comes an elderly British gentleman—on a sentimental journey, he calls it, to a country which is only a name to most of his countrymen, but which is associated with the ancient history of his race. The long-livers have outgrown the language of the *Elderly Gentleman* and have new modes of expression to fit their wider horizons and the changed outlook on life which the surety of living three hundred years had given them. The *Elderly Gentleman* soon feels the discouragement which he was warned would overtake him if he mingled with the long-livers. He is committed to the care of a "primary" of fifty-six—a flapper, as her people reckon age—for he cannot stand association with the "secondaries" and "tertiaries." Shaw attests his belief in the persistence of British characteristics in this episode. Anglo-Saxonism will not be an easy thing to efface, even with the shifting of races, and evidently party politics is still a feature of British government. The British envoy of 3000 A.D. is a butt for his raillery as Lloyd George and Asquith were in the earlier episode.

Napoleon is introduced. He is irrelevant to the play except as the descendant of Cain, the spiller of blood. But Shaw has great fun at his expense by pitting against him *The Oracle*, who leads him on and lets him make himself thoroughly ridiculous. Then she burlesques shooting him, and when he sees how he has been tricked, he stalks off in high dudgeon.

In the end, the *Elderly Gentleman* finds himself so stimulated by contact with the long-livers that he cannot bear the thought of going back. He pleads with *The Oracle*, a young woman of one hundred and seventy, to be allowed to stay.

THE ELDERLY GENTLEMAN: I cannot go with them. I cannot live among people to whom nothing is real. I have become in-

capable of it through my stay here. I implore to be allowed to stay.

THE ORACLE: My friend, if you stay with us, you will die of discouragement.

THE ELDERLY GENTLEMAN: If I go back, I shall die of disgust and despair. I take the nobler risk. I beg you, do not cast me out.

She consents and takes his hand. As he looks into her face, he stiffens and falls dead.

THE ORACLE: Poor short-lived thing! What else could I do for you?

IN THE fifth and last play, "As Far as I Thought Can Reach," laid in 31,920 A.D., Shaw pushes his theory of creative evolution to the verge of imaginative absurdity. Children are now hatched from eggs at the age of seventeen.

Creative art has advanced to the point where a scientist has succeeded in harnessing the life-force and with it energizing the bodies of a man and woman modeled by one of his friends. They are not reasoning beings, but they respond to every stimulus.

Shaw puts his gospel into the mouths of the *He Ancient* and *She Ancient* of this last play. After eight centuries of life, only the joys of the intellect seem desirable to them. They are as indifferent to physical beauty and pleasures as they are to physical discomfort.

The creative arts they class with the dolls of childhood. The *He Ancient* resolves his philosophy of art into a brief phrase: "The truth is that you can create nothing but yourself."

ACIS (*an artist, musing*): I can create nothing but myself. Ecrasia, you are clever. Do you understand it? I don't.

ECRASIA: It is as easy to understand as any other ignorant error. What artist is as great as his own works? He can create masterpieces; but he cannot improve the shape of his own nose.

ACIS: There! What have you to say to that, old one?

THE HE ANCIENT: He can alter the shape of his own soul. He could alter the shape of his nose if the difference between a turned-up nose and a turned-down one were worth the effort. One does not face the throes of creation for trifles.

At the last, the ghosts of *Adam*, *Eve*, *Cain* and *The Serpent* appear near the temple.

Viewing the life they set in motion, the first parents are completely baffled.

ADAM: I made the earth bring forth by my labor, and the woman bring forth by my love. And this is what has come of it. What do you make of it, Eve, my wife?

EVE: I nourished the egg in my body and fed it with my blood. And now they let it fall as the birds did, and suffer not at all. What do you make of it, Cain, my first-born?

CAIN: I invented killing and conquest and mastery and the winnowing-out of the weak by the strong. And now the strong have slain one another, and the weak live forever, and their deeds do nothing for the doer more than for another. What do you make of it, Snake?

THE SERPENT: I am justified. For I chose wisdom and the knowledge of good and evil, and wisdom and good are one.

CAIN: There is no place for me on earth any longer. You cannot deny that mine was a splendid game while it lasted. But now! Out, out, brief candle!

EVE: The clever ones were always my favorites. The diggers and the fighters have dug themselves in with the worms. My clever ones have inherited the earth. All's well.

ADAM: I can make nothing of it—neither head nor tail. What is it all for? Why? Whither? Whence? We were well enough in the Garden. And now the fools have killed all the animals, and they are dissatisfied because they cannot be bothered with their bodies! Foolishness, I call it.

Lilith now appears out of the shadows and her speech, which ends the play, sums up Shaw's argument.

LILITH: They have accepted the burden of eternal life. They have taken the agony from birth; and their life does not fail them even in the hour of their destruction. Their breasts are without milk; their bowels are gone; the very shapes of them are only ornaments for their children to admire and caress without understanding. Is this enough, or shall I labor again? Shall I bring forth something that will sweep them away and make an end of them as they have swept away the beasts of the Garden, and

make an end of the crawling things and the flying things and of all them that refuse to live forever? I had patience with them for many ages; they tried me very sorely. They did terrible things. They embraced death and said that eternal life was a fable. I stood amazed at the malice and destructiveness of the things I had made. The pangs of another birth were already upon me when one man repented and lived three hundred years; and I waited to see what would come of that. And so much came of it that the horrors of that time seem now but an evil dream. They have redeemed themselves for their vileness and turned away from their sins. Best of all, they are still not satisfied. The impulse I gave them in that day when I sundered myself in twain and launched man and woman on the earth still urges them. After passing a million goals, they press on to the goal of redemption from the flesh, to the vortex freed from matter, to the whirlpool in pure intelligence that, when the world began, was a whirlpool in pure force. And though all that they have done seems but the first hour of the infinite work of creation, yet I will not supersede them until they have forded this last stream that lies between flesh and spirit and disentangled their life from the matter that has always mocked it. I am Lilith; I brought life into the whirlpool of Force, and compelled my enemy, Matter, to obey a living soul. But in enslaving life's enemy, I made life's master. For that is the end of all slavery, and now I shall see the slave set free and the enemy reconciled, the whirlpool become all life and no matter. And because these infants that call themselves ancients are reaching out toward that, I will have patience with them still; though I know well that when they attain it they shall become one with me and supersede me, and Lilith will be only a legend and a lay that has lost its meaning. Of life only is there no end; and though of its million starry mansions many are empty and many still unbuilt, and though its vast domain is as yet unbearably desert, my seed shall one day fill it and master its matter to its uttermost confines. And for what may be beyond, the eyesight of Lilith is too short. It is enough that there is a beyond.

The play of next month will be "The First Fifty Years," an interesting dramatic novelty by Henry Myers. See July EVERYBODY'S—out June 15th.

A Mystery Serial—The Strange Story of a Girl

SWALLOWED UP

While Charlie Is Falling Down in His Search, Hope and Kelsey Escape from the Sanatorium. There Is an Auto Smash-up. They Take Refuge in an Empty House, and Then—

By Mrs. Wilson Woodrow

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Begin this serial with any instalment. The story is here up to this issue.

THERE was no light-hearted conversation with Gibbs as Charlie plodded along the oil-soaked highway following those elusive tire-tracks.

One cannot always be sportive. Occasions will arise which tend to more serious reflection, and pushing a disabled motor-cycle over an uncertain distance under a broiling sun and in pursuit of a long-vanished flivver is one of them. The June afternoon which, in his leafy tree-top, had seemed a foretaste of heaven, out here on the reeking road was—well, it was hot. The sweat ran down his face; the smell of the oil got up his nose and into his throat; the going was slippery, and the motor-cycle yawed perversely on unexpected tacks. And back of it all was the dismal persuasion that it was wasted effort, a forlorn hope bound to end in failure—that he was a rather ridiculous tortoise outstripped by a wiser hare.

So Charlie's self-communings were without either *espièglerie* or originality, just the good old standbys usually expressed in print by dashes.

He had much to discourage him. The Combine that had stolen Hope Ranger to hold her for ransom had acted as he had predicted. Opening communication with her father through him, who could, thanks to his irregular life, read the symbols tramps scrawl on freight-cars and fences, it had furnished proof that she was alive and well. It had then demanded that a hundred

thousand dollars in Liberty Bonds be left under the railway crossing on the Lone Hill Road.

Ranger had wanted to surround the spot with detectives pounce upon whoever came for the bonds and force him to reveal the girl's hiding-place—for no one had believed she would be returned, even though the bonds were given up. But Juarez Charlie knew too much of the methods of the Combine.

He had begged Ranger to let him handle the matter. And he had supposed that he had hidden himself well enough to be able to mark the taking of the bonds—which must be done by some one in a car—without being seen. His plan had been to follow this car on his motor-cycle.

He had identified the car, but when he tried to follow he had found the spark-plugs missing from his machine, and the machine itself marked in chalk with the sign of the Combine! All he could do was to plod along hopelessly, following the track left by the peculiar tires of the car that was his quarry.

He swore himself finally to a garage about three miles down the road, and—lo!—as he wearily turned in toward it, Gibbs, symbol of all-rightness with the world, was again at his side. For there, leading up to the gasoline reservoir and pump in front of the place were the four tire-tracks, three smooth and one corrugated, which he had lost for the last half-mile in the cross-hatchings of traffic.

"The only question, old top," Charlie observed to his shadowy familiar, "is whether they stopped for repairs or merely for gas. You can't tell, with the tracks running onto that patch of cobblestones just the other side of the reservoir."

IT WAS quickly settled, though; for, as he pushed his motor-cycle in at the door of the garage, the first thing he saw was the flivver shoved back against the wall. No possibility of a mistake, with those telltale tires and the license-plate, number 2,155-633, staring him in the face.

Charlie's glance flitted over the interior of the place, seeking the two men who had been in the car; but there was no sign of them. The only persons about, besides the proprietor, were a mechanic operating a power-lathe at the back of the shop and a shock-headed, half-grown boy.

But if the men he wanted were not there, their car was, and undoubtedly they would return. The proprietor must know them; he might even be a confederate.

As Charlie explained the difficulty with his motor-cycle, he took quick stock of the man from the dented derby hat on his head to the soles of his spattered shoes, and he inclined to the opinion that the garage-keeper was straight, having neither connection with nor knowledge of the affair at the archway. He was a surly, taciturn fellow whom it would be hard to pump, even though he had nothing to conceal.

So far, his sole response to Charlie's story of hard luck—certain details modified—had been an indifferent grunt. He didn't seem to care why a new spark-plug was required or for the fact that his customer had been compelled to walk six miles, or for any of the rest of it.

To Charlie, impassivity was always a challenge. Wooden stares and bottled-up silences were spurs to his ingenuity. One of his favorite mottoes was: "The glummer they are the easier they blow off." All that was needed was to sound the note of self-interest.

So as his tongue wagged on in the recital of his adventures, he was thinking. The one infallible appeal to an automobile man was the chance to make a sale and pocket a comfortable commission.

Charlie had already represented himself as a canvasser taking orders for "put-it-

together-yourself" furniture; and he now deftly turned to an account of his fictitious tribulations in this calling.

"What I need," he said, "is a half a dozen or so different lines of household necessities. Then if they didn't want furniture, I could shift off to silverware, mouse-traps, brooms and brushes, patent fire-escapes or bungalow aprons. I'd be sure to catch 'em somewhere along the line. But the trouble with that"—he pulled at his lip—"is that I'd have to carry such a raft of samples. I've been wondering if it wouldn't pay me to chuck the old motor-cycle and buy me a nice little car that I could load up with my stuff."

The gleam of venal interest he had anticipated brightened the garage-keeper's dull eye, and he unbent to articulate speech.

"Sure looks like good business to me," he agreed. "An' 'twouldn't really cost you no more to run a car."

"Except for the first expense," said Charlie. "No; I don't suppose it would. And I wouldn't want a great, big, high-powered car, you understand." His eye fell as if by chance on the flivver. "Now, there's a little trick that would suit me. Doesn't happen to be for sale, does it?"

"Shouldn't wonder." The garage man led the way toward it and threw back the hood for inspection.

"You know the party that owns it, then?"

"Oh, yes; best of friends. Whatever I say he'll stand for."

"Wonder if I'm acquainted with him? I know a number of people round here."

"Well, you might call it bein' 'quainted"—with heavy jocular—"seein' that you're talkin' to him right now. I'm the owner of this 'bus, Captain."

Fortunately he did not see Charlie's face. His mind was bent wholly upon making a sale, and he wanted to present his goods to the best advantage.

"'Course she ain't lookin' her prettiest"—apologetically. "She's just in off the road; and, with this ile all over everything, she's kind of spattered up. Coupla strangers come in here with a big tourin' car that they said wasn't hittin' right, and asked me if I could let 'em have a machine to go over White Plains way while their'n was bein' fixed. So I rented 'em the little boat. But, shucks, they might as well have used their own; there wasn't nothin' wrong with it

that I could see 'cept a loose bolt or two. Guess they're green at the game, an' got scared."

"Likely the two men I saw pulling away from here just as I came in." Charlie was fishing desperately. "One of them hatchet-faced with a black mustache? Had a five-passenger, didn't they, with four 'sixes' in the license number?"

"Nope." The proprietor shook his head. "Both these boys was smooth-faced. An' 'twas a seven-passenger they had. I didn't notice the license-number."

And the boy, it developed, had been equally unobservant.

Charlie recognized with a sense of utter frustration that it was useless to probe further. All he could get was a description of the two men so vague that it would fit a million others, and a lack of any identifying details for the car.

HE LET the garage man go on talking, expatiating on the merits of his car in the effort to make a sale, and even offered an occasional comment or question. He did not admit it to himself, but he was staving off the moment when he would have to face Ranger and confess that he had bungled.

"Wait now," the garage-keeper was saying, "till I turn over the engine for you, and then you can see for yourself that I ain't misstated nothin' to you——"

They were interrupted by a hail from the doorway. Some people in a touring car had just driven up, and were making signals of distress. The garage man relapsed into his professional phlegm.

"Hold on a minute," he said. "I gotta see what these pests want. Then I'll be back."

Charlie leaned against the wheel of the flivver, and while he waited rolled a cigarette. He was chasing ideas, trying to invent some way of softening the blow to Ranger. But, depressed by disappointment and humiliation, his faculties seemed befogged. He was conscious only of a resentment against fate. His "dope" throughout had been absolutely correct, his strategy faultless; and yet he had been whipsawed at every turn. Of what use to pit oneself against an organization possessed of such infallible foresight and resource? He gave a little gesture of impotence, and scattered the tobacco he was rolling to the floor.

With a muttered imprecation at his awkwardness he reached for his sack, and as he did so, saw the garage man complete his examination of the car at the door and shake his head at the owner.

"This here is a job that's goin' to take a couple of hours," he announced; "and you can't go on in the shape you're in, gears all pulled loose. You folks'll just have to pile out and stick around till I get it fixed up."

There were protests, exclamations, remonstrances; but the garage man was firm, and in the end the party—four women and two men besides the driver—with American good humor under trying circumstances got out of the car, and the proprietor and the boy rolled it into the shop.

Regarding this as a good opportunity to get away, Charlie called to the garage-keeper that he would be back presently and started for the door. Without looking at the group of stranded motorists, he pushed his motor-cycle past them, when he was stopped by a high-pitched, faintly familiar voice calling,

"Oh, how d' y' do?"

He looked up to see a pretty girl in futuristically vivid sports things moving toward him.

For a moment he was puzzled, and then he remembered her as the strayed princess of the smart little millinery shop where he and Ranger had bought the hat.

On an outing, she had laid aside temporarily something of her professional hauteur; but one does not easily discard an habitual pose, and her chin still held its proud angle; her movements, even in the mood of holiday abandon, were languidly suggestive of the *mannequin* on parade.

"Juliet!" he exclaimed, sweeping off his hat. "To think that you remembered me after all these years!"

"How could I forget the man who ordered that—that lid?" Laughter struggled with statuesque repose and won. "Oh, you men! You're a scream when it comes to millinery. Too bad"—her charming mouth drawn down, her eyes full of mocking commiseration—"that your lady friend didn't like the hat."

At her words, a splinter of lightning went through Charlie and shivered along his spine. In the black, boggy depths of his slough of despond, there flashed a ray of hope. It blinded him for one moment, but

in the next he was himself again—Juarez Charlie, cool, needle-witted, the hunting dog catching a scent and steadying to a point.

IN THE twinkling of an eye the humble canvasser of "put-it-together-yourself" furniture became without change of costume or stage properties the sophisticated, world-worn man of affairs.

"She didn't like the hat?" he repeated, lifting his shoulders and eyebrows at the same time. "Capricious, capricious creatures, you women!" He shrugged off the possibility of ever understanding them. "And false, too. She raved about it to me, swore that she was delighted with it."

The princess laughed, but looked at him doubtfully. A pretty trick of hers, he found space in his mind to record—that way of looking up through her long lashes.

"You're such a kidder," she said, "I don't quite make you. But just the same there's something queer about it all."

He wanted devoutly to assure her that there was something very queer about it all, and that he meant to get to the bottom of the mystery before he parted from her. But a light touch was best now. Her curiosity was roused; let it seethe a bit until it reached the boiling-point.

"Fancy meeting you here"—a flattering touch of sentiment in his smile—"partners in hard luck, one might say, both victims of a breakdown. Bless the breakdown"—with light fervor. "When I had mine, I was hurrying back to a board-meeting from my friend Loring Ranger's place over yonder."

She gave the start he expected.

"You mean the father of Hope Ranger?" She showed all the blueness of her widened eyes.

"Yes; poor Lorry!" He was not acting now. "It's a time when he needs all his friends about him. But"—back in his rôle again—"as I was about to say, I can hardly regret my accident since it brought me the opportunity of meeting you once more."

Her coquettish smile was a mere automatic response to his gallantry. She saw the possibilities of the situation. Most persons feel a certain relish in being connected even indirectly with those in the world's spotlight.

"Oh!" With an inflation of her best great-lady manner she turned to her friends.

"I want all you folks to meet Mr. —"

"Juarez." Charlie suavely helped her out.

"Mr. Juarez." Her tone showed that the oil-and-sugar name had its effect. "Surely. Mr. Juarez, shake hands with Mr. and Mrs. Greenberg"—motioning to the driver of the car and his wife. "Mr. Juarez, Miss Schupp, Miss McCarthy, Mr. Dave Greenberg and Mr. Leffler." She ran through the circle. "Mr. Juarez is just back from a visit to the father of Hope Ranger."

Mr. and Mrs. Greenberg, Mr. Dave Greenberg, Miss Schupp, Miss McCarthy and Mr. Leffler immediately became animated interrogation-points. Charlie was the target for a bombardment of rapid-fire questions.

Was it true that Hope had followed a Bolshevik lover to Russia? How about the report that she had been seen in Montreal playing in the chorus of a burlesque company? Had she really been arrested for shoplifting and concealed her identity in order not to disgrace her family, the fiction of her disappearance being kept up now to hoodwink the public?

Charlie answered guardedly, with the air of one who could tell a great deal but whose lips were for the moment sealed.

While they questioned and commented and advanced different theories, he was revolving an expedient which had suggested itself to him as the best means of separating the princess from the rest of the party.

"By the way"—he appeared to speak under sudden inspiration—"Lone Hill Inn is only a short distance from here, and you will be held two hours before your car is ready for the road. Won't you all be my guests at dinner? We can probably get some kind of conveyance to take us over."

But Mrs. Greenberg thriftily protested.

"*Na, na!*" She wagged her head negatively. "That would be imposin' on good nature, Mr. Woozer. I've heard how they sting you over to that Lone Hill Inn. My sister-in-law stopped there once, and she says all they had was crab-meat salad and tea for three, and when the check come—would you believe it?—it was thirteen dollars and forty cents. Pos-i-tive-ly! Not countin' the waiter. *Na, na!* If you want to take Miss Da Costa and go, it's all right. We'll wait until you get back. And you needn't mind about us here. We've got a good lunch in the car."

The princess demurred faint-heartedly, and Charlie, who wanted to pat Mrs. Greenberg's fat shoulder for this show of tact and sound common sense, pretended to accept her decision with reluctance.

"Go ahead, Elsie," urged Miss Schupp and Miss McCarthy. There was no question in their minds that their friend had made the conquest of an eccentric millionaire.

Juarez Charlie, fearing a change of mind, hurried the princess into the garage-keeper's flivver, and they drove away with the shock-headed boy acting as chauffeur.

His proximity and willingness to overhear everything that was said permitted nothing but the most casual conversation, mostly in the nature of badinage on Charlie's part—the tissue-paper wrapping of the caramel of admiration—which the princess received with appreciative laughter and such comments as: "Quit your joshing," "Better keep that salve; you might stub your toe," and "Swell line of bunk you carry, Mr. Man!"

But under his lively banter he never forgot his purpose. Yet even after they reached the inn and were seated at a small table, the gentle, flattering third degree which awaited the princess had still to be deferred.

IN THAT expensive environment, with groups and couples of the new rich all about them, and one of those intimately attentive waiters hovering over them, Miss Da Costa became self-consciously absorbed in her own impersonation—the finished cosmopolite viewing the multitude through a non-existent lorgnette.

In order to recapture her wandering attention, and also to get rid of the too solicitous waiter, who inspired the irritation of a persistently buzzing fly, Charlie began to consult her about the menu, ordering so prodigally that she gasped and remonstrated. And when a girl from an exclusive little shop in the Fifties puts the brakes on a dinner-order, the *ultima thule* of extravagance is in sight.

If Charlie had not been so engrossed in contriving the best method of securing the last scrap of information the girl had to give, he might have noticed that her pose was as near cracking as his own. Her responses now were forced, and punctuated by sudden silences. She seemed to be turning something over and over in her mind.

"Do you know, I've just been thinking about that hat, and I believe I've struck it at last. Of course, as soon as you spoke of having been to Loring Ranger's, I knew that it was him who was in there with you that day—funny I didn't recognize him at the time—but I couldn't see why he had bought that freak of a hat.

"I've hit it now, though. Listen!" She made little spears at him with her fork. "Hope Ranger's not missing at all. She's going into musical comedy or the pictures, and this hullabaloo is all a publicity stunt. I'm right?"

Charlie's expression committed him to nothing; but the quick droop of his eyelids seemed at once to shield the secret and admit the possibility.

"You think fast, little one. Go on, and I'll tell you whether you're getting warm or not."

"Well, as I take it, Hope didn't like your choice; so she tossed it over to her maid, and the maid saw a chance to make on it and brought it back. I suppose it was the maid, although I'd have sworn—" She paused, tapping her white brow with a glittering finger-nail. "Say"—her face clearing—"is the Ranger girl sick?"

Charlie leaned nearer across the table.

"But what makes you think that?"

"Because I simply couldn't place that woman as anything but a trained nurse."

The slight pallor of excitement showed through Charlie's dark skin. He reached for the carafe and filled the princess's glass.

"A tall, blond woman?" He tried the ruse he had used on the garage-keeper.

"No; medium-sized and dark. Attractive. She wanted to exchange it for a prim little toque. She knew right where she was, too. I told her we never made exchanges, and she came straight back, said the ostrich plumes and the paradise were worth half a dozen small hats and she only wanted one. Well, the long and short of it was that I agreed to have a duvetyn toque made up for her and send it to her at the hospital."

Charlie's spoon clattered against his demi-tasse. His hand shook as he recovered it and his self-control at the same time. He lowered his voice confidentially.

"Mrs. Ranger has not been well. But don't tell any one that she's in a hospital."

"Oh, that's it? Then I did get it right."

She showed a natural pride in having her surmises confirmed.

"You say the woman left her address?" He looked a little worried. "We have to be so careful about anything getting out."

"Yes; she wrote it down for me; Doctor—Doctor—something's—sanatorium Barcelona, Long Island. Wait a minute! I've got the name. Bristow!"

Charlie felt an insane impulse to get up and wave his arms and shout. The princess was a mascot. She had turned his luck. Adorable girl! The best he had hoped for was to get some description of the woman who had exchanged the hat.

But here, without an effort, he had been given name, address, every requisite detail to locate her. At last he had in his hands a thread that must lead to the missing girl.

He called the waiter and begged his companion to order something more, pressing her to think of some ambrosial delicacy not on the card. There was nothing too much he could do for the princess.

Then, with the waiter suggesting this and that costly *bonne bouche*, he made an excuse and hastened to the telephone to call up Ranger at his country house in Westchester.

"LORRY, they got away with it."

Charlie broke the news without preamble as soon as he had Ranger on the wire. He believed it better to get his bad tidings over first, before he gave a hint of the wonderful new lead upon which he had stumbled.

"I know that," Ranger returned, with biting brevity. "The other side has already furnished the information."

"You've heard from them again?"

"Yes. A stick was thrown in the dining-room window with a note on it."

"No trace of the person who threw it?"

"Oh, yes. One of the gardeners caught a small boy of the neighborhood who admitted that he did it, but that doesn't get us anywhere. The boy, who was too scared to be anything but truthful, says a strange man down on the road gave him a dollar to throw the stick. But he can't give any adequate description of the man or information that amounts to anything."

"You can bet on that," said Charlie. "They'd never leave anything like that open. But what did their note say?"

"Wait a minute, and I'll read it to you." There was a pause, and then Ranger's voice resumed: "There is no address; simply three lines of typewriting, and the usual circle and 'X' signature. It runs:

"You have tried to double-cross us, contrary to our explicit instructions; but we will give you another chance. Deposit two hundred thousand dollars in bonds on Friday afternoon, same place, same time. Failure to comply or any further duplicity on your part will mean your daughter's death."

"Two hundred thousand!" Charlie's voice supplied the exclamation-point. "That's raising the ante with a vengeance. Still, what else——"

"I won't do it. I can't raise that amount of money on a moment's notice." Ranger went up in the air. "You don't understand business. Here I've just thrown away one hundred thousand on your advice, and now—Where are you?"—querulously. "I've got to talk to you to-night, at once. You'd better come out here to the house."

To Charlie's quick ear, it seemed as if there were a slight shift in the telephone connection. He imagined he could detect through their conversation the sound of some one else breathing.

"Hold on just a second, Lorry. Have you heard anything new from Philadelphia?"

The question was a code-warning arranged between them to indicate that some one was listening in.

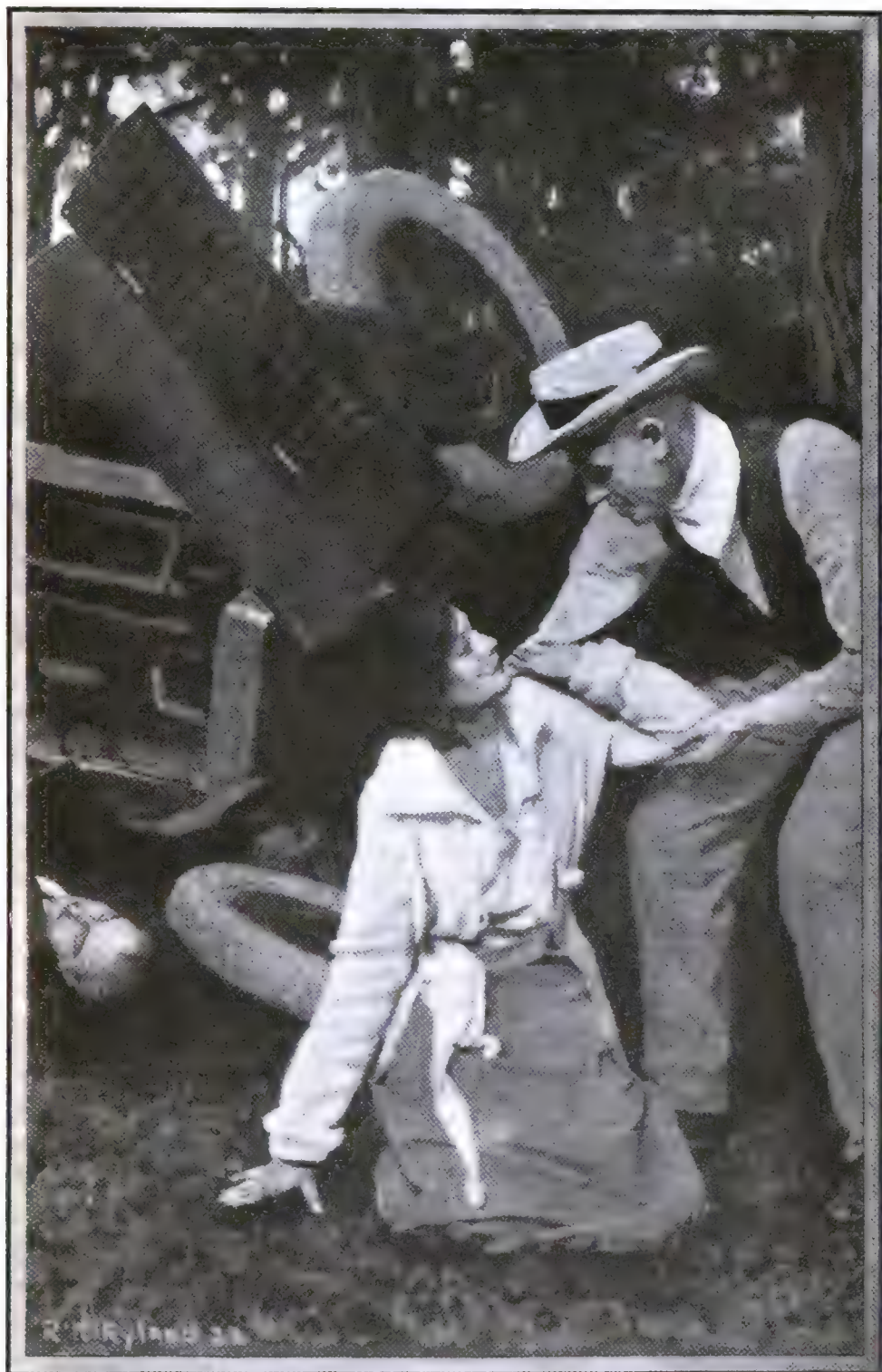
Ranger gave an impatient "Humph," but did not disregard the caution.

"Hold the wire"—gruffly.

An interval of about two minutes passed, and then he spoke again.

"You were mistaken. I looked up all the extensions, and the only person who could have done any eavesdropping was Fitch, the footman, who was down in the hall, and he was twenty feet away from the instrument and half asleep. Anyhow, it's all right now. I've shut off all the switches except this one, and put Mary Lou on guard. Besides, there's nothing to say that the whole world couldn't hear."

"Isn't there?" Charlie couldn't keep the elated ring out of his voice. "Well, let me tell you, Lorry, that I've dug up a great new clue, the most promising yet. In fact, I don't think it's too much to say that I expect to have Hope definitely located by to-morrow. You're going to get back your



Hope rose uncertainly to her knees. A man was bending over her. "Want to get up? That's good." His hand was under her elbow, helping her to rise.

daughter, I believe, Lorry, and your hundred thousand, too. No"—as Ranger stormed him with excited questions—"I'm not going to say a word more over the telephone. I really ought not to have said as much as this, but I couldn't help it."

"But, Charlie, listen!" Ranger entreated. "You're not going to play a lone hand again, are you? For heaven's sake, remember what happened to-day. Show a little reason; at least come here to the house and talk it over with me. Then we can decide whether it isn't wisest to consult Inspector Bailey."

Charlie's mobile face hardened as he listened.

"Sorry, Lorry," he answered crisply; "but this requires quick action. I hate to keep you in ignorance, but I've fooled round too long as it is. I've got to be moving."

And deaf to Ranger's expostulations, he hung up the receiver. He had burned his bridges behind him. Unless he made good this time, he was done, discredited, stamped as a meddling fool.

For a moment he hesitated. After all, wasn't he taking a good deal on his shoulders? It was Ranger's right to direct and advise. He was the one who had everything at stake.

No! Charlie flung off his gathering scruples. This was too good to be spoiled by interference and the heavy-handed methods of the police.

With his old confident swagger, he made his way back to the princess. She looked up with a smile as he reached the table, then glanced down at the watch on her wrist.

"It's been lovely, Mr. Juarez," she said; "but I'm afraid I ought to go now. They'll be waiting for me, you know."

With everything she did, she increased Charlie's good opinion of her. Itching to be off on his quest, he had been wondering how long courtesy would compel him to sit there before he could suggest leaving. Women never knew when enough was enough. But she had solved the difficulty. Really, a wonderful girl! She had brains, and knew how to use them. And, at the same time, she was a peach for looks.

While he was engaged in these pleasing reflections, the waiter laid the check before him. It fully bore out the reputation ac-

corded the Lone Hill Inn by Mrs. Greenberg; but Charlie would not have quarreled if it had been twice as extortionate. He felt that he had more than got his money's worth. In his large and generous mood, he gave the waiter a princely tip. Also, he remembered liberally the hat-boy, the door-man and the fellow who opened the door of the flivver.

ON THEIR arrival at the garage, they found the touring car repaired and the party ready to start. Charlie swung the princess lightly from one car to the other, held her hand a moment in parting, promised to meet them all the next Sunday at Mrs. Greenberg's for dinner, and then stood waving as they drove away.

With their departure, he shed his rôle of moneyed idler. Stern business demanded him now—just how stern he did not realize until he started to pay the garage-keeper for the use of the flivver and discovered that he had only a dollar and thirty-five cents left in his pocket.

Habitually careless of finances, Charlie had never stopped to reckon the extent of his spendthrift prodigality at the inn.

However, he did not betray his dilemma; his training saved him. He still had his tongue, and it had extricated him in more embarrassing straits than this. Glibly, steadily, he talked on to the garage-keeper while trying to decide on his next move.

Of course he could call up Ranger and settle the matter in two minutes; but that would only confirm Loring's present estimate of him as a flighty incompetent.

He surreptitiously explored his various pockets in the faint hope of finding some overlooked currency, and his fingers came in contact with a familiar object. Like a magic talisman, it restored his equanimity and courage.

It was an imitation meerschaum pipe, and it—or rather, its fellows—had for years provided Charlie with what he called his "little graft." He always carried with him on his journeys an assortment of these, retailing at about fifty cents apiece, and on his arrival in a "hick" town would set out with one of them in his pocket carefully wrapped in an old silk handkerchief. In the office of the railroad hotel or at the Main Street pool-parlor, he would mark down his prospective victim—sometimes a lounging

patron, sometimes the proprietor of the place—and strike up a conversation, mesmerizing him with his gift of language. Then, at the psychological moment, he would draw out his pipe and, handling it tenderly, would offer it for inspection.

"My father put in thirty-two years coloring that bowl," he would affirm, pensively reminiscent, "brought it with him when he came over from the other side, and gave it to me on his death-bed. I never thought that anything could make me part with it, but old Hard Luck is some persuader, and I've made up my mind to let it go. Of course, if I had time to turn a deal, I could easy get as high as four or five hundred for a pipe like that; but these bum lungs of mine tell me that I can't afford to lose any time getting to Arizona." Here a hollow cough would shake his whole frame. "So, if you know of anybody, friend, that's willing to come across with the twenty-five I need to make up my fare to Phoenix, the meerscham's theirs."

The listener generally fell for the bargain, and by the time the fraud was discovered, Charlie would be many miles away.

Of course, with the garage-keeper, he had to vary his story, but he did it so effectively that when he closed the transaction, he had paid all charges against him and had eleven dollars to boot.

"The poor fish!" muttered Charlie as he rode away. "He doesn't know it, but I'm only accepting a loan from him. I'll have Lorry straighten it out as soon as I get back. Funny about it; I feel almost as if I'd been doing something dishonest.

"Mr. Juarez," he repeated thoughtfully. "By jiminy! It sounded like music when she said it."

Then resolutely putting out of his mind the princess, the garage-keeper, Ranger, everything that interfered with his study of the problem before him, he raced toward Long Island.

JUST about the time that Juarez Charlie obtained the clue that pointed to Dr. Bristow's sanatorium as the place where Hope Ranger was held a prisoner, Hope herself drove Dr. Bristow's own car through the hedge and out into the open road. George Kelsey, who had made their escape possible, was with her, and Bristow, they knew, would be as anxious to get him back as

Hope herself, since Kelsey, who had been one of his doctors, had been held as a prisoner on the pretense that he was insane simply because he had learned of the alienist's criminal connections.

Kelsey knew more than ever now—knew that Alderman William Higgins, who lived, ostensibly because of his nervous condition, at the sanatorium, was really the head of the gang that had stolen Hope and made Bristow its tool. Hope had planned this flight; but Kelsey had made the escape possible by knocking Bristow down and drugging him in his office, and had then snatched Hope from the guards and helped her into the car that was waiting for Bristow.

In that breathless rush through the hedge, Kelsey, turning, saw Miss Copley, the head nurse, dash down the steps and heard her raise the alarm. She, who pretended that Hope, greatly resembling her, was her sister, was the one Kelsey feared most of all—the woman was danger incarnate and utterly ruthless.

"Drive like the devil!" he had cried. But the plea was unnecessary; Hope was getting every ounce of speed out of the motor without urging.

Their plan had been to drive west, change the car at some garage, first disabling it, and then proceed in another less conspicuous one to New York.

But Kelsey noticed that she had headed east, which was well, as it would lead the pursuit in that direction. Half a mile beyond the hospital, though, she turned into a narrow lane, and he soon saw that by circuitous routes she was now making her way west.

Some of the ways she took were little more than wheel-tracks through the scrub oak, and more than once he was afraid she had run them into a cul-de-sac; but always there appeared some unexpected bend or cross-road into which she unerringly turned and extricated them.

He recognized that she had spoken the simple truth when she had said the day before that she knew the island like a book.

It was still broad daylight, their path streaked with the rays of the setting sun. Neither of them spoke. Crouched over the wheel, Hope drove—a valkyrie of a driver, and, for the time, nothing more, every fiber of her bent on that. And, in the ecstasy of escape, Kelsey gave no thought

to the dangers still before them. His pulses beat to the high measure of freedom. There was intoxication in this wild, onward rush. Action at last, after days of stagnation! The sense of power thrilled through him. He had matched his strength and his wits against Bristow and had won—he and she together.

How could they fail? He looked at her, and felt that he saw her for the first time. Her face was set straight before her; the wind and excitement had whipped the color to her cheeks. Her eyes, dilated and brilliant, were on the road before her, noting, remembering, calculating distances, tracing with the car the devious ways of the map in her brain. He sensed that she, too, was *exaltée*, but the flame of her spirit was sternly bound by will and purpose.

Twilight was falling now. As they whirled on, following tangled and tortuous byways, he could no longer see ahead of him. The gray, creeping dusk was blotting out space, and time with it. The woods that streamed by them were dim masses of shadow, formless and strangely unsubstantial. The fancy came to him that the earth was no longer beneath them, that they were flying through cloud banks.

In the faint chill of the night wind blowing in from the sea, with the blurring dimness about them, his first keen, sharp elation was gradually dulled. The tingle of victory was dying within him. There was no immediate sign that they were followed, and yet there grew on him momentarily an ominous, subconscious sense of pursuit.

A vivid picture of what must be happening at the hospital rose before him.

Morton would be working like mad to revive Bristow. They would be pouring black coffee down his throat and walking him up and down the floor. Anita Copley, the embers of her murky eyes striking hard points of fire, would be directing, sending telephone messages, her first stormy panic congealed to a steellike efficiency. The old alderman, drawn from his seclusion by the emergency, would be close at hand, seated with his great bony knuckles clasped over the head of his stick, bowed vulturelike above it, deadly executive. The systematic order of the institution would be disorganized, the nurses whispering in groups heedless of their patients, attendants run-

ning about in confusion, car-loads of searchers dashing away from the door.

Kelsey knew that Hope, too, must be thinking of the craft and energy that would be employed in their pursuit, and his admiration mounted for this slender girl, who, under such tension, continued to drive with all the ease and insouciance of a Ralph di Palma.

With a twist of the wheel she brought them out of a lane they had been following through the scrub oak onto a more traveled highway, and ahead of them he saw the lights of a garage. She slowed down and stopped, rubbing her numb hands.

"Run ahead and reconnoiter," she said, "and I will get ready to put the carbureter out of commission if the coast is clear. Then, with another car, we will make a *détour* round that bend and strike into the main road."

He was already out of the car and starting on his way.

Two or three minutes passed and then he came running back.

"There's a car there!" he panted. "There were men in it—Bristow's chauffeur. The garage men were gathered round it. We haven't a second to lose. They're after us!"

She jumped into her seat and slewed the machine sharply around. They whizzed down the road and back into the scrub oak again. He heard shouts behind them, and the loud honking of a horn, with an answering honk-honk to the right and left—the baying of the pack.

KELSEY felt not the bitterness of defeat but of revolt. He had hoped from the beginning that, if they were taken, it might be by some officer of the law. They could then make such a scene, their story would be so sensational, that it would force attention. Hope might even gain consent to speak to her father over the telephone. They would all know her photographs by heart. The resemblance to the lost girl could not fail to strike them, and any constable or deputy sheriff would take chances on earning that one hundred thousand dollars' reward, no matter how wild a gamble it might seem.

But Anita Copley had evidently done her best to combat that possibility. It was probable that she had limited the pursuit to the attendants of the hospital. That

would mean at most half a dozen cars out after them, and all those men, including Higgins' chauffeur and Bristow's, knew the island as thoroughly as Hope did.

He had once or twice thought of stopping at some farmhouse and requesting the use of the telephone; but he knew that the news would spread like wild-fire, and what householder would admit them, two young, vigorous maniacs who had just made a desperate escape from an asylum?

And now what earthly chance had they? Hope might continue to weave through these byroads and twist and turn on their trail like a fox; but the hunters were pressing them hard.

He looked back, and, as he did so, a car shot out from an intersecting road and took after them. It gained steadily.

"They've got us pocketed," he said.

"Not yet." The wind blew back her words to him.

They had come to a point where the road forked in three directions. She turned into the first one.

"We'll try for our old house now," she said. "We can get to the back entrance by a short cut through the woods just beyond here."

"Our old house?" He had not heard of it before. "But the car— They will track us by that, no matter where we go."

"Let them," she said briefly, and with what struck him as remarkable *sang-froid* under the circumstances.

He looked back again.

"They've followed," he said. "They're on us now."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when there was a rush of wheels, the purr of an engine, and the pursuing car shot by them to draw up ahead in the middle of the road.

There was nothing for them but to stop. They could not hope to pass in that narrow lane, and it was equally impossible to turn.

As the car passed them, Kelsey had made out that there were two men in it. One of them leaped over the side and came running back.

Kelsey flexed his muscles and waited. The man hurrying toward him was a big burly fellow, but Kelsey was no lightweight himself. Armed or unarmed, he was ready for him, and then he'd take on the other— both at the same time, for that matter.

The man held something in his hand, but it was not a gun.

"That you, Dr. Bristow?" he said, coming close and speaking in a harsh, husky whisper. He halted, his jaw falling. "What, the——"

Hope leaned forward.

"I am Miss Copley," she said. "I wasn't quite sure of the doctor's directions."

"Oh? Miss Copley?" His truculence gave way to relief. He thrust a bulky envelope into her hand without a word and turned back to his own car.

"Better let us get a piece ahead," he muttered over his shoulder. "I've got an idea we're being trailed. We just shook off a couple of other cars."

He was gone. The car in front started and whizzed on. There was no time for question or comment, no time to express wonder at this strange incident. Hope had thrown the envelope into Kelsey's lap, and was once more driving at full speed.

THE Merrick Road, wide and smooth, opened out before them, and many automobiles were on it.

"We have to cross here," she murmured. "Pray that our luck holds."

Kelsey sat taut while she drove down the highway for about a quarter of a mile. Motors passed them, going in both directions, but no one intercepted them. Then she turned off, and soon they were in a tree-lined lane, where the ground was rougher than any over which they had passed.

They seemed to have thrown off the pursuit. The fog was growing denser. There was no sound but the bumping and creaking of the car over the ruts. Then the stillness was broken by the staccato coughing of a motor-cycle somewhere before them.

It grew louder. It was coming toward them. Hopelessness pierced their rising hope. No turning here! This flat feeling of disenchantment. Their adventure was over. And yet, if it were only one man scouting for them, Kelsey believed he might manage him.

The explosive racket drummed on their ears. A headlight rayed yellow through the fog. Panic seized Hope. In the open, with a choice of branching roads where she could twist and double, her nerve held; but here,

pocketed at last, she yielded to an unreasoning impulse.

Before Kelsey realized her intention, she jerked the car to the left in so short a turn that they made it on two wheels.

He saw an open space before him. A tall stump seemed to rise out of the ground. She swerved frantically to avoid it, and they crashed into a tree. Blackness! He knew no more.

Hope, thrown clear of the wreck, struggled for her breath, and then rose uncertainly to her knees. A man was bending over her.

"You hurt?" She could dimly see his white, frightened face. The motor-cycle stood at the side of the road. "Want to get up? That's good." His hand was under her elbow, helping her to rise.

She stared blankly at the crumpled bulk of the overturned car, and then ran toward it, stifling a scream.

"Oh, where, where—" she cried, and stopped.

Kelsey lay almost at her feet, motionless, half under the tonneau.

The man caught him by the shoulders and dragged him out. Hope dropped down beside him, moaning faintly. She lifted his head and it fell limply against her arm. The blood was trickling down over his temple, clotting his hair.

Juarez Charlie was running practised hands over his body.

"He's breathing," he said, but shook his head. "Looks to me like a fractured skull."

She forgot everything—their plight, the probability that this stranger was sent to capture them—and cried out, imploring him:

"Oh, go! Go for a doctor at once!"

"I'll have one here in no time." He started for his motor-cycle. "Sure you're all right?"

She thrust out her palms as if to push him on his way.

"Oh, don't mind me. Hurry! Hurry!"

He jumped to the saddle, caught his spark almost immediately, and the jerky crackle of his machine was soon lost in the distance.

Hope made a pad of her own handkerchief, and taking Kelsey's from his pocket, folded a bandage of it and bound it about his forehead. Then, with his head on her lap, she waited, bending over him.

At last he stirred; he opened his eyes.

"Oh, you're alive!" she cried. He looked at her dazedly for a second, and then tried to sit up.

"What's happened?" he asked.

"The car turned over, and you were unconscious."

"And you?"

"Oh, I'm all right. I was only shaken up a little."

His eyes veered to the ruin of the car.

"Good heavens! They've got us sure. To think that it's all ended so!"

"No!"—vehemently. "Not if you can walk. The house is near. It's an old place that my father owns," she explained. "I spent every summer here when I was a child. It's empty now; the old caretaker died about six months ago."

He got up and took a staggering step or two.

"Lean on me," she said quickly.

"I'll have to, I'm afraid."

A hedge loomed ahead of them. With some difficulty she guided him to a gap in it, and they slipped through. The house was only a short distance away.

"Wait!" She ran toward it and circled to the rear, trying the windows as she went. He followed more slowly.

"Here's a broken pane," she called cautiously.

Joining her, he slipped his fingers through the jagged hole, unlocked the sash and pushed it up.

WITHOUT waiting for Kelsey's rather shaky assistance, Hope clambered through the window. Following more slowly, he closed and relocked it. The air of the room was oppressively stale, the flat, lifeless atmosphere of an uninhabited house.

Swaying on his feet, Kelsey reached out for some support and clutched a table. He sat down on it heavily. His ears were ringing, his eyes blind. The world was slipping away from him again.

"George!" Hope's voice was quick with anxiety. She put her arm about his shoulders and shook him slightly. "George, what is it?"

That "George" was a spur to his ebbing will. He pulled himself together with a tremendous effort. There was no time for him to sit here nursing his confused, dizzy head. She needed him.



"Liberty Bonds?" she repeated. "A hundred thous— Why, that's my ransom! It must be it.
You can go to Bristow now and give it to him."

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She was untying the bandage, and he felt her light, cool fingers on his forehead. It was deliciously soothing. He wanted to put his head down on her shoulder and stay so. But he dared not yield to magic now.

She moved swiftly away from him, and he heard the sound of running water across the room.

"I'm going to wet this handkerchief," she said, "here at the sink. This is the kitchen."

"Wait!" He got up and made his zigzag way toward her. "Let me get my head under the faucet."

The cold water was a marvelous restorative, refreshing and stimulating him.

"Is the cut still bleeding?" she asked presently.

"No; the blood has clotted on it. It's only a scratch, anyway. Ah!" He inhaled deeply and stood upright, brushing the water from his face. "I'm all right now."

"But it's dangerous drawing water," he said. "They'll know we've been here."

"Let it run a little," she suggested. "It will look as if it had been left so a long time."

"That's so," he said. "And now we've got to plan our next move. You know this place, the house and grounds. They'll be here soon, and they're bound to track us to the house. We've got to get out. Is there any way we can throw them off?"

"We stay right here. They won't find us." There was an irrepressible, mischievous bubble in her low laughter. "Leave that to me. I know every inch of this place. Give me your matches."

"You mustn't strike a match here."

"Not here, of course. But in the closet there. Quick—give them to me. Oh, don't be afraid! I shall close the door."

Here, as on their wild drive, she had taken the initiative, and, still protesting, he reluctantly gave her the box.

She laughed again, and he heard a door open and close. A moment and she was back.

"Good hunting," she said. "I went after provisions and found a box of crackers and some jam. My father comes down here occasionally for the duck-shooting, and I thought something might have been left. Now come with me."

She slipped her free hand in his and led him through what seemed to be a dining-

room into a hall, and then up a flight of stairs. Kelsey stopped.

"What's your idea?" he asked. "To hide in the attic? That won't do. They'll make for that the first thing. The house is impossible; there won't be a crevice or a cranny overlooked. Outside, we may have a ghost of a chance. The woods will be well beaten, of course. But we might hide out on them. With good luck we might reach the coast and secure a boat. If I'm not at home in a car, I am on the water."

"We're not going to the attic. Come on." She tugged at his sleeve. "Don't stand there and argue. I know what I'm doing."

Her certainty, the mysterious elation in her tone, her air of leading him to a new adventure overbore his judgment. And, after all, whatever they did was a hazard. Success or failure lay in the toss of a coin.

He yielded the point and followed her without further remonstrance into a long, low-ceiled chamber which he assumed to be directly above the dining-room.

"Now you can rest for a moment," she said, guiding him to a chair. "Sit down. And, please, the matches again. Oh"—anticipating his objection—"there will be no light that can be seen from the outside."

HIS eyes, accustomed to the darkness, made out a great stone fireplace at one side of the room. She passed it, a light, gliding shadow among shadows, and stood before the wall beyond, in front of an old-fashioned cupboard about two feet above the floor. She stepped into it. There was a tiny spurt of light as she struck a match.

By it, he saw her kneeling figure close to the dark wood which lined the back of the closet. Her hand, strangely white in the brief yellow flare, focused his eyes with its sure, definite movements. One finger outstretched, she was tapping the boards rapidly. Counting, was she?

The match went out. He heard her jump down, and she came toward him in an airy rush. Her resurgent vitality brought life to the close, dust-laden room, and in his fancy she filled it with light and color.

"You think we're caught in a trap like poor little mice, but we're not." She beat her hands lightly on his chest, her feet dancing. "Let me tell you." She forced herself to sober coherency. "This is an old, old house, built in the early days of the Colonies,

when people had to be constantly on guard against the Indians and provide ways of escape. Can you make out that big, old-time chimney where the fireplace is? It runs up from the cellar, and there is a fireplace just like this in the dining-room below, and another back of it in the kitchen, which is in an ell, or wing, not quite so high as the main house.

"The chimney tapers gradually as it goes up, and so is narrower on this floor than on the one beneath. That leaves a space on either side of it up here, and the colonists utilized this as a hidden passage by which they could get to the rear of the house if the front were taken, or vice versa. The entrance on this side is through that cupboard where you saw me. All you have to do is to slide back two of the boards, and you are inside. Then, by passing round the chimney, you can get out through a similar opening into the attic of the kitchen wing. Once there, you must crawl across the rafters, drop through a scuttle into a small room over the kitchen, and from this down a stairway to the wood-shed outside. But it will not be necessary for us to do all that. We shall simply hide in the passageway until the search is over."

"Great Scott!" He wanted to shout. It seemed extraordinarily banal to hear himself asking, "And can we stand upright in it and breathe?"

"Oh, yes; it's pitchy, of course, but air gets in through the crevices."

She took up the crackers and jam from a chair and, going back to the cupboard, stowed them in the aperture.

"Now I'll get some pillows to sit on. We'll be luxurious."

She gathered them up from a couch and stuffed them also into the passage.

A thought pricked the bubble of his exultation.

"But surely this is known all over the neighborhood?"

"No"—positively. "My father showed it to me when I was about twelve years old. I had never heard a whisper of it before; and I would have if it had been gossiped about. The servants would have been full of it."

"If that's true," he drew himself up, "we've got a fighting chance."

"Listen!" she interrupted sibilantly.

Through the dead quiet of the night they

heard the sound of a motor—more than one. They went to the window. Along the rough road they had come they saw headlights approaching, moons of orange through the fog. There was a stop where their car had crashed. Men piled out and with electric torches followed their footsteps through the hedge and to the house. They heard the sound of voices below. A narrow shaft of light was upflung to the window, and they cowered back.

"Hurry! We must hide now," she urged.

He stepped up into the cupboard and crept into the passage behind. She closed the cupboard door and slipped the concealing panel into place.

"Sit down on the pillows, and we shan't make a sound," she ordered.

Heavy thuds on a door below, reverberating through the house. Then the tramp of feet and the slamming of other doors. Men were on the stairs now. Passing the chamber door, they went on up another flight to the attic. They made racket enough there. Furniture was flung about; there was the roll of heavy pieces on casters, the scrape and thump of trunks and boxes moved with difficulty.

They came down at last to begin their search of this floor, and now they were in the room. The cupboard doors were jerked open; threads of light streaked through the cracks of the panel. Kelsey and Hope sat motionless, hardly daring to breathe, her hand clasped tight in his.

"Well, they're not in the attic or on this floor—we know that," said a voice. "And Kelly and Weeks don't seem to have had any better luck down-stairs and in the cellar."

"I never did believe they were in the house," grumbled another voice. "They'd have been fools, with that patch of woods before 'em."

"Let's go. We haven't overlooked a rat-hole," said the first.

The sound of their voices grew fainter. Then they heard other voices raised in argument in the hall down-stairs. There was more movement, and finally the banging of the front door. The men were gone.

HOPE and Kelsey waited in that unearthly silence for a long time; some one might have been left behind, might even be in the room.

At last, careful not to make the least noise, she slid back the panel and looked out.

"They've left," she whispered ecstatically.

"Sh," he whispered back, his mouth close to her ear.

Again they waited and listened.

"There's no one about," she said finally. "But it's safer to stay here for the present." She leaned nearer solicitously. "How is your poor head?"

"Not so good. But it will be all right in the morning."

"You're hungry. It aches because you are hungry. I am, too."

She made small, rustling noises opening the cracker-box.

"Good thing I brought a knife. I'm a wise old campaigner. I've camped out too many times not to remember that a kingdom was lost for want of a knife."

"Horseshoe nail," he corrected.

She stifled her laughter.

"Knife. But have it your own way. Oh, it's hard to spread jam in the dark. Give me your hand."

Their fingers touched, and she laid a cracker in his palm.

"I've never tasted anything quite so good," he affirmed.

"Nor I. The crackers are musty, but it improves the flavor."

"You were wonderful to think of them. But you always are—the most wonderful—" His voice broke. He caught her and held her to him crushingly. "You're safe—still safe! What a night!" He buried his face in her hair. "But they haven't got you. If they do, they have to kill me first."

Her arms were about his neck, her cheek against his.

"I almost killed you with that car," she said. "If I had, I shouldn't have cared if they had taken me." She ran her light fingers over his eyes. "His dear, broken head!" she said tenderly.

"Oh!" She drew back with a sudden recollection. "I forgot; we both forgot. That envelope those men gave us!"

"By George! Have I got it?" Kelsey thrust his hand in his pocket and brought it out. "It's thick, whatever it is—feels like papers. It must be for Bristow. Clever of you to play Anita Copley! Close the panel and we'll strike a match and see what it is."

"Matches smell. If they should come back——"

"There's air here. The smell will be gone in a minute."

Her curiosity was as great as his. She struck the match. The light made them blink. He ripped open the envelope.

"Liberty Bonds!"—with a gasp. "A bunch of them!"

"Liberty Bonds?" she repeated. "And for Bristow. But why were they so furtive about it? I believe they're stolen."

"More than likely. Let's count them. Strike another match."

She did so, and held it until it burned her fingers.

"An even hundred thousand dollars," he said in an awed tone. "Ten bonds of ten thousand apiece."

"A hundred thous—" She clutched his shoulder. "Why, that's my ransom! It must be it. Oh, I'm free, free! You can go to Bristow now and give it to him."

"My dear! My dear!" He drew her close with protecting arms. "If I went to him with two hundred thousand, he wouldn't let either of us go. He wouldn't dare."

"That's true," she murmured. He felt her droop against him. "I thought for a moment we were out of all our troubles."

"We're going to get out of them," he said stoutly. "They'll be searching the woods for a while yet, but they'll get tired of that. Then will be our chance to slip out. Are you sleepy?"

"No; I'm too excited."

"Well, I am. No sleep for two nights, and this crack over my head. Here, take my watch and wake me at the end of an hour. Then you must sleep for the same time."

"Let me see the time." She struck another match. "It's just eleven o'clock. I'll wake you promptly at twelve."

Kelsey stretched himself out, and she slipped a cushion under his head. Almost at once he was asleep.

HOPE sat in the cramped dark space beside the sleeper, her chin on her drawn-up knees, her hands clasped about them, listening to his slow, regular breathing.

Her thoughts drifted back over their brief association. How unerringly she had been drawn to him! How quick had been his understanding, how sympathetic, how

clever his assistance, how strong, how capable, how tender!

The paradox of her position struck her. Here she was, a fugitive, hunted like a thief, driven to a precarious refuge, separated from friends, family, home, and not knowing whether she would ever see any of them again; dangers all about her, her only prop a stranger whose very name had been unknown to her a month before. And yet at this moment life held a savor, a richness, a meaning that all the ease and freedom and luxury she had known had never given her. She loved him, and he loved her.

She stretched out her hand to touch his hair. Then quickly drew it back. A loud creak in the room outside snapped on her ears like a pistol-shot and brought her to a convulsive attention. She sat there motionless, every faculty keyed to concert-pitch. But there was no further noise—only the unbroken, stagnant silence. At last she relaxed. It was but the settling of the old house. Her vigil would be full of these night noises. She must steel her nerves to that sort of thing.

How long had she been watching? The hour must be almost up. It would be a shame to wake him. She drew out the watch and glanced at its luminous dial. Only ten minutes after eleven. She could hardly believe that it had not stopped. It seemed to her that ages had passed.

The black stillness wrapped itself about her like a cloak. Kelsey was sleeping so deeply now that she got the idea he was no longer breathing. In terror she bent closer, and her fingers went fluttering to his face. He stirred slightly at her touch, drew a short breath or two, and then, as she withdrew her hand, relapsed into that profound slumber.

She resumed her musings. Just when she became conscious of the approach of a motor she could not tell. Its pulsating throb seemed to have been beating on the air for some seconds before she recognized what it was. She thrust her head forward, listening. Driven at high speed, it was coming nearer. Significant, on this unfrequented road.

She debated a moment whether to wake Kelsey; but deciding to make sure first that an actual danger threatened them, she softly pushed back the panel and slipped out into the room and over to the window.

The car, a roadster containing two men, whirled in at the gate and up the weed-grown drive, and stopped with a grinding of the brakes almost directly beneath her.

Out from the shadow of the porch came a man and walked toward it. Kelsey's prudence in not leaving their retreat too soon was justified. The searchers had left some one on guard. The driver of the car jumped out to meet him; and as they moved forward into the glare of the head-lamps, Hope shrank back trembling. The figure in the long, light motor-coat was Bristow.

The two stood talking, the man evidently giving his report, Bristow breaking in with short, direct inquiries.

HOPE forced herself to conquer her frightened recoil and again drew as near the window as she dared. If only she could hear what they were saying! Something might be dropped which would indicate the scope and nature of their plans.

Never taking her eyes off them, and with infinite pains, she unlatched the window and raised the lower sash a fraction. By a miracle it lifted easily, and without a squeak. Kneeling on the floor, she laid her ear close to the sill. The voices floated up to her distinctly.

"No doubt about their having given you boneheads the slip," Bristow was saying. He did not raise his voice or storm, but the man cringed at his tone. "You're sure they didn't get into the house?"

"I don't see how they could have. We went over it with a fine-tooth comb."

"Then it's no use spending further time here. You say the others have been down in the woods for an hour? That ought to be long enough to look under every bush and behind every stump. Kelsey's too cunning to hope to find cover in that little patch of trees, and he'd keep clear of roads and houses, too. He'd strike for the shore, aiming to steal a boat and get away in the fog. I've already blocked that move; we'll have them by morning. But those fellows down in the woods will be more useful on the beach. Call them in."

The man drew a whistle from his pocket and blew piercingly on it.

Hope's heart was singing. Within a few minutes the pack would be off on their false scent. Perhaps it might be best to remain in the old house for another day; she would

consult Kelsey about that when she woke him. At any rate, they would not have to act on the exigencies of the moment. They would have time to decide upon the safest course for them to take, and plan it in detail.

Bristow was tramping up and down the drive below. She saw him stop short and turn his head toward the road in the direction opposite to that which he himself had come. She caught at the same time the thrumming of another motor.

"Who's that?" Bristow exclaimed.

HE HAD not long to wait for his answer. The car, a physician's runabout, turned in at the gate and drove up. A thin, elderly man got out and stepped toward Bristow.

"Ah, Dr. Creamer—you?" Bristow reverted to his more suave and courteous manner, although there was interrogation in his tone.

"I see you got ahead of me," said the other. "Was it a serious injury?"

"Injury?" Bristow stared at him. "I don't know what you're talking about. I'm out after two runaway patients."

"So?" Creamer clicked his tongue commiseratingly. "But I got a call to come out here to an automobile accident. I was away from my office at the time." His voice, like himself, was rather mild and vague.

"Oh, I see." Bristow nodded. "That must have been my two patients. They took my car and made kindling-wood of it just the other side of the hedge there. But their own injuries must have been trifling, if they had any. At least they've been able to show a clean pair of heels to my men, and— But"—abruptly—"who gave you word of this accident, doctor?"

"Well, that was the funny part of it," Creamer began, in his slow way. "I was out on a call, as I tell you, over to Melville Hawkins's on the Port Jefferson road, and when I got back my wife told me that Tom Simonds, the garage man, had been trying to get me. I called Tom up, and he said that about ten o'clock some fellow on a motor-cycle had come dashing up to his place and wanted to know how to get to the nearest doctor, saying there had been a terrible accident out this way—car overturned with a man and a woman in it, the woman apparently not hurt, but the man either dead or dying."

"Did Simonds know this man on the motor-cycle?" Bristow interjected.

"That's the joke I was just coming to. Tom, it seems, had been talking over the wire to his brother Ben not two minutes before. You remember Ben, doctor—moved away and started a garage up in Westchester County. Well, he had been swindled earlier in the evening by a slick stranger that came along and sold him an imitation meerschaum pipe. He gave Tom a description of the chap, and asked him to look out for him if he ever happened to come this way. And, sir, Tom had hardly got through talking to him and rung off when in popped the identical fellow with this story of the accident.

"Tom's a deputy sheriff, you know, and he walked Mr. Swindler right over to the calaboose. He wasn't inclined to take much stock in anything the fellow said, but the man was so persistent about this accident that he finally telephoned me.

"Of course," he rambled on, "considerable time had elapsed before I got the message, and it was probable that the people had already been attended to. But I came on the chance that I might be needed."

"You didn't talk to this fellow in the calaboose yourself?" Bristow asked sharply.

"No; I got the story from Tom."

"And Simonds didn't say whether this motor-cyclist knew the man and woman in the car?" He put the question with tightened lips.

"Not that I recollect, although I sort of gathered the impression that they were strangers to him. Why do you ask, doctor? Think these runaways of yours had help from the outside?"

"These patients would have neither the influence nor the money for that." Bristow made a hasty disclaiming gesture. "No; my idea was that they might have babbled something to him—something of their plans, I mean. I suppose Simonds will hold his prisoner on this swindling charge?"

"With his own brother making the complaint?" Creamer cackled derisively.

"When I get my flown birds, I may drop over and have a talk with the fellow. At present I'm too busy directing the search. We tracked them to the point where they overturned the car, but since then they seem to have vanished into the air. It's certain they're not in the house, and we've been going through the woods for an hour.

"Whistle again for those men, John," he ordered impatiently. "They're taking all night to come in."

Creamer gave a jump as the shrill blast was repeated. He had been staring at the house, lost in thought, piecing together the fragments of some old memory.

"Look here, Doctor"—he laid his hand on Bristow's arm—"wasn't it from the Rose heirs that Loring Ranger bought this property? Or, no; you wouldn't remember. That was twenty years ago, before your time. But no matter; I'm sure that it was. And I've got a sort of a dim recollection of a story I heard when I first started in practise here that one of the Rose houses—it may not have been this one; it might have been Jim Rose's place over east, or Dave Rose's down on the shore—but one of them, anyhow, so that tale went, was built with a secret hiding-place in it for escape from the Indians."

"What?" Bristow's voice was like the clang of steel on iron.

"But, as I say," Creamer maundered on, "it might not be this house at all. And even if it is, how would those patients of yours know anything about it?"

"You never can tell what a lunatic knows," said Bristow darkly. "We'll search the house again. Some one in the neighborhood must know the way to that hiding-place—some of the old people?"

"They've all died off. And I don't believe any of the present generation of Roses would know, either. They're only distant cousins."

"Never mind." Bristow brushed discussion aside. "If it's there, I'll find it. Wherever it is, I'll find it if I have to tear the old barracks apart, board by board. Are those fellows never coming, John? Give them another whistle."

"You see," he explained to Creamer, "I've got to get those two without loss of time. The woman is a sister of my head nurse, Miss Copley. She's in a terrible state about the girl. The man is dangerous—marked homicidal mania. He made a murderous attack on me just before he left. I don't dare to think what may happen."

HOPE knelt at the window, frozen into immobility. She had felt so secure, so certain that they had thrown dust into Bristow's eyes, that Creamer's revelation,

drawn from the dusty pigeonholes of his memory, came like a physical blow on her heart, stunning her into a paralysis of thought and feeling.

This was the end of their brave adventure. They would be taken. She realized it impersonally—the whole ignominious capture—but it didn't seem to mean anything.

She looked at Creamer, mild, kindly, no suggestion of the bloodhound about him. They had baffled, outmatched Bristow. And then, at the last minute, he had been led to the scent by this garrulous old country doctor.

One great, heaving sob broke through her lips. The torpid blood ran scorching through her veins. She had never known what it was to hate, but now she quivered, burned with a savage fury. She wanted to throw herself on this frail old man, choke him, tear his face with her finger-nails. He was to blame. Through his officious tattle she and Kelsey would be dragged back to that horrible place.

No! Her spirit rose in revolt. That should not be. If they could not both escape, one of them must. But how? How?

Suppose one of them were to surrender and mislead Bristow as to the whereabouts of the other. But which one? Oh, not she. It was Hope Ranger they really wanted. She couldn't go back. And yet Kelsey, as a man, had the better chance. He could pass unnoticed where she, a woman, would be stopped and questioned. Yes; she was the one to go.

In the pocket of her jacket was a pencil and some of the paper she had used in her senseless scribbling. Hastily she wrote on one of the sheets;

Bristow knows there is a hiding-place in the house. I am going to give myself up. Reach my father. Love forever. HOPE.

Without giving her impulse time to cool, she hurried back to the cupboard and crept into the passage, closing the panel carefully behind her. Kelsey still lay in deep, exhausted sleep. She bent over him, her lips near to his, then drew back, fearing to waken him. Very gently she slipped the note between his relaxed fingers and then felt her way along the wall until she reached the other exit.

She was delayed here for a second or two in manipulating the panel, but accomplished

it, and through inky blackness wormed on hands and knees across the rafters of the kitchen loft to the scuttle. Still in blackness, she swung herself down through it and dropped.

The next instant she landed with a little thud on the solid boards and groped her way to the stairs descending to the woodshed in the rear of the house.

How they creaked! It seemed to her that every step she took must advertise her to the group out on the driveway. She could hear plainly the blowing of the whistle and even the crunching of their boots on the gravel.

The wood-shed door grated wheezily, too, as she tried to open it. For all she could do, the rusty old hinges whined in a high, complaining key as she drew it back.

Outside at last, and still no sign that she had attracted any attention. Shielded by two or three outbuildings, and concealed by patches of shrubbery, she reached the gap in the hedge. Passing through it, she made a quick *détour* to the right to muddy her skirt and shoes in the trickle of a brook, and so came at last to the open space where the wrecked automobile lay.

She heard the men who had been whistled back approaching from the wood, and began dodging from tree to tree as if attempting to hide.

They saw her, as she had intended they should. They stopped, stalked her, closed in about her. Two of them caught her. She made a show of struggle, but they held her fast by the arms.

IN ANSWER to their shouts, Bristow and the others came running through the hedge.

"Ah!" he said, with unctuous satisfaction, as if a weight had been suddenly removed from his chest. "Now to get the other one." His eyes were like points of steel as he came close to Hope.

"Where's Kelsey?" he demanded.

She looked at him vacantly.

"Who?"

"Kelsey," he repeated. "The man you went away with. Where is he?"

"That man? He was under the automobile; there was blood on him."

"Yes, yes! But what became of him?"

Will Hope's resourceful powers be equal to the desperate situation in which she now finds herself?

See the next instalment of "Swallowed Up" in July EVERYBODY'S—out June 15th.

She leaned toward him with the air of imparting a confidence.

"That man is crazy. He said he wasn't, but I know better. I wanted him to hide in the woods. I know these woods." She passed her hand uncertainly over her forehead. "I don't know how I know them, but I do. I wanted him to hide here, but he wouldn't do it. He talked about getting a boat down on the beach, and when I wouldn't go with him, he ran away." She waved her hand vaguely toward the shore.

"But you were both in the house?" Bristow held her with his compelling, hypnotic gaze.

"The house? I know the house, too. I told him. But"—plaintively—"he wouldn't go. I've lost my pencil, and I can't write. Please give me a pencil."

Bristow's eyes bored through her, but she looked beyond him, listlessly indifferent.

Finally he gave a curt order to have her taken back to the hospital. As she took her place in the motor between two attendants, she stole a covert glance at him. His face was impenetrable. Did he believe her? Would he still search the house? Had she saved Kelsey—or really accomplished anything at all?

Again in the sanatorium, in that muffled atmosphere of secrecy and silence, encompassed by reticence and reserve, she would know only by results.

The tension to which she had been keyed all evening broke, and the reaction was correspondingly acute. She shivered. Her courage was gone. She felt weak, helpless, afraid. She thought of Higgins, a gray, evil old bird of prey; of Bristow, brilliant, plausible to the point of making black seem white, the iron hand in the velvet glove; of Anita Copley, avaricious, poisonous, unfettered by scruples.

It came to her with stunning force that unless Kelsey were speedily recaptured, these would see the imminent collapse of their whole carefully built structure of extortion and blackmail, their personal safety and reputation in jeopardy. They would never permit that. They would go to any lengths to obliterate all proof against them.

Oh, what was before her? What?

So It Goes

*A Little Homily on Life by a Sailorman Who
Knows the Perils of the Sea in Calm, Storm
and Amid Ice, Yet Would Not Die Ashore*

By Bill Adams

LONG ago I was on the passage from Portland, Oregon, to Falmouth for orders. We made a fair passage until she was seventy miles north of the line in the Atlantic. There, one day, the wind died.

Day passed to night; the sky serene, the sea dead; a full moon throwing shadows of every rope and ratline, every idle sail—each mast and spar and backstay; the ship as abandoned to a doom.

At midnight I stood at the wheel—the moon above, the sea below.

My comrades slumbered on the hatches, faces hidden from the moonlight. On the fo'c's'le head the form of the lookout man moved to and fro, hunched, followed by a hunched shadow.

Night passed, day breaking in silent fury. Day passed as the night, night returning in slow course. Night passed, day returning.

An order came.

"Clew up all!"

We clewed up, leaving all sail to droop, festooned, safe from wear on mast and backstay.

Day passed, night returning.

Night passed, day returning.

Day crept to another night, night stealing to and away again—the fresh water getting low in the tanks.

The water allowance was cut down, leaving us enough to keep our mouths moist—tepid, rusty, evil-tasting fluid from tepid, rusty, evil-scented tanks.

By day we tarred down the standing rigging, the ship flashing in the sun, glistening

under the stars—unconscious of her liveliness, a naked queen, bewitched.

Day and night dragged on, thirst becoming harder to endure, food growing ever more nauseating—white maggots crawling in the sea-biscuit, the smell of the harness-casks horrible, beef, pork rotting under the equatorial sun.

Twenty-one days, twenty-one nights she lay—sea-drifted, alone.

At the twenty-second dawn, a black line stretched along the horizon to the west. We gathered at the rail, watching, our lips cracked, our buttons all gone, cut off, chewed upon to keep our mouths moist. Our jackets, our shirts hung open upon us, belts gathering dungaree trousers to lean shapes.

The blackness stole toward us.

We denuded ourselves, primeval, upon a primeval sea.

An order came.

"Sheet home the tops'ls!"

Dry throats repeated it, naked forms gliding to bunt and clew-line, to sheets and braces, blocks whining on the stillness, raucous voices crying drearily, sails rustling to their old appointed places.

In front of the wall approaching us, sea-fowl hovered, wind-borne; myriads of fish leaped.

An order came.

"Stand by!"

Naked bodies stepped to sheet and hal-yard.

A voice cried,

"All right!"

Naked figures lay upon their backs along the deck, mouths open, arms outstretched—waiting.

A torrent fell upon us.

We sprang at each other, screaming, shouting, leaping, wrestling. We rolled upon the deck. We drank the pleasant water through every pore, gulping it down. An order came.

"Sheet home all!"

Five and twenty naked sailors ran happily along the rainy deck, singing, shouting cheering—sheeting home her sails once more.

Naked figures swarmed aloft, swinging, ghost-white, above the sea.

A breeze lifted from the heart of the dark-

ness, the ship breathing deep, stealing across the sea—a robed queen, free and beautiful.

The calm was over.

So it goes—calm, rain, storm and the rumbling bergs, a bright, delighting beauty of refreshment when the work is done, the chantey-man singing—singing the song that I would wish upon the stone above my grave if die ashore I must:

Oh, leave her, Johnny, leave her *like a man*,
And leave her, Johnny, leave her;
Oh, leave her, Johnny, leave her while you can,
And leave her, Johnny, leave her.

Oh, I have heard my skipper say:
"Leave her, Johnny, leave her.
You can go ashore and draw your pay;
Leave her, Johnny, leave her."

Program for July

THE complete novel for July will be "The Remittance-woman," a jewel-mystery story laid in the Orient, written by a mystery-story master and a man who knows the Orient—Achmed Abdullah.

The novelette will be "Willie Takes the Roses," a story that contains a multitude of laughs and something more, written by a man who knows better than most how to build a humorous situation—Courtney Ryley Cooper.

The serials will be "A Flash of Gold," the great human story of a woman, by Francis R. Bellamy; "The Blood-Ship," a stirring, old-time sea tale, by Norman Springer, and "Swallowed Up," the strange story of a girl's disappearance, by Mrs. Wilson Woodrow.

The short stories will include "The Ladder in the Jungle," by Alan Sullivan; "Vengeance," by Hugh S. Martin; "Harum-scarum," by Clarence Budington Kelland, and "George and Pigweeds," by James Ash.

July *EVERYBODY'S*—out June 15th

Sweet *and* Sour

Now That You Have a Respite from Tending the Furnace, You'll Have Time to Enjoy This Tale about the Steam-Heat Trials of a Householder and Other Things

By Walter De Leon

Author of "Everything Save Honor," etc.

REMEMBER me telling how Freda, my tight-wire-walking wife, after marrying me and retiring us both out of vaudeville to a section of Jersey jungle misnamed a farm, decided that to make life complete we should have a family, and how, on account of her being thirty-eight and only recently wedded, she adopted a new-born twin from another Swedish lady living about a mile from us? Remember me telling how, a year later, she and little Christina hopped over to Sweden and copped off twenty thousand dollars which her daddy had promised to the first grandchild which his daughters should present him by fair means or foul, just so neither of the parents had anything to do with the show business?

Well, it seems like Freda's father—he'd used to be in the circus business on the other side till he got rich and particular by buying a lot of earth in Russia for a couple of copecks, waiting till somebody suspected oil in it, and then selling out for a chunk of regular money—it seems like he gave Freda a piece of change for herself besides the babe's check. Freda spent it right away that fall on some improvements and additions to the house.

Conspicuous among these additions was a furnace for to boil water to make steam to fill the radiators to warm the house. It was a neat-looking furnace, nickel-plated in spots and painted pretty, which the plumber said would be no trouble to take care of.

It only took me ten days to learn how to keep the coal from falling through the grat-

ing before it burned, and how to fix the dampers so the fire would keep going long enough of itself for me to eat my meals. And after that first ten days I ordered another eight ton of coal. The way Cleopatra—which was what I christened the furnace on account of her alluring exterior, hot and cold interior, the attention she demanded and because I'd been such a mark for buying it—the way she ate coal at fourteen-fifty a ton was heartless.

One cold November morning, I and Cecil, our sturdy eighty-year-old hired man, went down in the cellar to try to coax a little warmth out of Cleo. Cecil begun by shaking down the ashes.

"Wait a minute, kid," I say. "Where are we going to put them ashes? We've got four barrels, two trunks, five soap-boxes, three condensed-milk cases, one oil-can and two suitcases filled with ashes and clinkers already. There's nothing left now but the baby's bathtub."

"Boss," says Cecil, shaking some soot out of his luxuriant whiskers, "we got to dig a hole for these here ashes."

"None of our shovels has long enough handles," I answer. "And besides, if we've got this many ashes already, and it's only November, can we dig enough holes in our measly little twenty-four acres to hold all the ashes Cleo will exude by May?"

"Worst of it is," says Cecil, expectorating querulously, "the colder it gets the more coal you burn, and the more coal you burn the more ashes you get; and it looks like it's going to be a hard winter."

Just then Freda's quaint foreign accent was heard at the head of the stairs.

"You find Mr. Renton down in the basement cussing Cleopatra, I think."

A LEAN, middle-aged man with a fur collar on an otherwise good coat stumbled down the steps. He cast a sad eye round the cellar and started shaking his head.

"How much coal have you laid in?" he asks in a voice suitable to a despondent undertaker. "I could have saved you just half."

"You picked a fine time to tell me," I say. "Where was you in September?"

"At our main office, perfecting our organization." The gloomy gent sighs. "Mr. Renton, my name is McNair—H. O. McNair—representing the Coal-Aid Company. We have recently perfected a fluid which is destined to revolutionize the coal industry—a fluid which will reduce coal consumption by nearly forty per cent."

"You're hedging," I say; "but even forty per cent. would help."

"We have signed statements from some of the world's most eminent engineers testifying to the efficacy of this fluid. And, gentlemen, we can put this fluid on the market at a ridiculously low price——"

"A fluid?" creaks Cecil. "How do it work?"

"With a spray," explained the solemn one. "You simply spray with a hand-spray this fluid over the coal, and it increases its combustion qualities tremendously."

"For example," I say, throwing open the furnace door.

McNair gazes sorrowfully at the dying embers I'd exposed.

"No, gents; we are not making demonstrations for any but stockholders in the million-dollar company we are forming to manufacture and exploit this marvelous fluid, which we call 'coal-aid.' We are selling stock for a few weeks only at ten dollars per share of preferred. Each share of preferred entitles the purchaser to three shares of common stock.

"Now, coal-aid will cut the total consumption of coal yearly by thousands of tons. Everybody will buy it. No matter how cheap coal becomes, coal-aid will make it cheaper. Gentlemen, if ever there was an opportunity for taking large and certain profits, coal-aid presents that opportunity.

Look at these prospectuses and statements! Why—" He pulls a bunch of printed matter from his pocket.

"Show it to Cleopatra." I say. "I ain't interested. I don't want stock. I want something to cut down my ashes."

"I forgot to state," McNair replies, "that we are supplying—gratis—to each and every stockholder a quantity of the fluid."

"That's different." I cheer up. The two thousand dollars which friend wife had saved me from losing on a deal in the summer was still lying dormant in the bank. "Suppose I could dig up a couple of hundred berries, say a thousand, how soon could you give me a demonstration of this here fluid?"

"A week from to-day," he promises.

"You'll find me near where I am now," I say. "Good-morning."

I and Cecil repair to the edge of our farm, the side flanked by the prehistoric trees and underbrush which never has been penetrated since the Indians rushed through on their way to Philly hoping to get there before old Will Penn should run out of beads. Chopping through the frozen crust, we start digging.

The more I figured coal-aid the sweeter I got on the proposition. When I got married I was broke. I'd made a lot of money in the twenty-two years I'd played piano in show business, but also I had lived right. Hard manual labor and a couple of lucky breaks in crops had give me a working capital which twice now had been rescued from the machinations of crooks by Freda's firm hands. I felt that Freda had no confidence in my business judgment. She had all kinds of money, including the first nickel she ever made, and though I'd picked the two bloomers, I'd been waiting for some good investment to show itself so as I could prove to friend wife that her husband wasn't just a poor sap. Coal-aid looked like the answer.

"Listen," I told Cecil; "don't say nothing to my wife about me going to invest in McNair's fluid. You know her ideas about taking a chance."

"She ain't got no ideas about it," Cecil said. "She don't never even *think* of taking a chance."

After one of Freda's wonderful meals that night, we was all gathered round a reliable wood fire in the fireplace in the living-room. The babe had been put to bed. Cecil was

dozing peacefully, his hands spread over his whiskers to protect them from flying sparks. Freda, in a rocker by the table, was knitting a sweater for little Christie. I had a copy of *Variety*, going through the route lists, trying to find the names of some of the friendly enemies I used to troupe with.

"Are they all dead?" I asked Freda. "There ain't nobody but Johnny Newcomers working any more."

"I tell you something, Billy," replied my placid helpmate. "I feel sorry for some of our old friends, and folks which last season didn't save their money."

"I know a couple of guys didn't save a jitney last season."

"Men I don't worry about, Billy," Freda answered, running off a lot of stitches on to a long safety-pin and closing the pin. "It's women. Me and you, we're lucky. We got a home and plenty food and money in the bank and a baby. That's much better as hanging round the booking-office waiting for somebody to get sick to take their place, eh?"

"Sure," I said. "Even should the roads freeze up so we couldn't get to town, we got enough flour and bacon and ham and mush and canned stuff and jellies and jams you put up and coal to last all winter."

"My goodness!" Cecil creaked, coming to. "We got enough for a couple of extra people."

"That ain't going to induce me to hire no assistant to help you empty ashes," I say.

"What would be nice, Billy," says Freda, picking up a dropped stitch, "would be to invite for two or three weeks some old friend who is broke or up against it."

"The idea is benevolent but unpractical," I announce. "The more broke and up against it they are the harder it'd be to pry them loose at the end of two or three weeks."

"My daddy," Cecil states; "my daddy once invited a friend to our house. He dropped in to spend Saturday and Sunday and stayed with us till the undertaker carried him out five years later."

"We ain't got that kind of friends," says Freda in her tranquil way.

I see the idea has took root in her mind.

"Anyway, we got to be circumspect as to who we invite," I say. "A fellow, for instance, like good old Jimmy Conger," I say, nominating an old drinking partner of mine.

"I think ladies first would be more polite," interrupts Freda.

"Hope you don't invite no lady who uses musk," says Cecil. "Musk is the only smell which makes me sick."

"Myrtle Carter don't use musk," Freda replies.

"Who?" I ask.

"Myrtle Carter. You remember her, Billy. She was the first girl who did poses plastic—and dressed in strip tights all over and had colored pictures and butterflies thrown on her by a stereopticon lamp."

"I remember her name and also her figure," I say, "but I don't remember her disposition. And that's the important thing about any house guest. Now, Jimmy——"

"Myrtle's disposition is better as Jimmy's. And she still has her pretty face and fine figure."

"How do you know?"

"I saw her last week when I went to New York."

"What's she doing?"

"Nothing. She ain't worked for five years, and she's spent nearly all her money."

"I suppose," I say, sarcastic, "she's only got enough left to pay her fare down here to our farm."

"She don't need to do that, Billy. I bought her a ticket."

"You bought her one! What for?"

"For the two-fifteen to-morrow," says Freda, rolling up her knitting and putting it away tidy.

WHEN I and Cecil met Myrtle at the station the next day, we saw that Freda had told nothing but the truth about her appearance. Myrtle was about thirty-two, I guess—tall, graceful as a dancer, with naturally gold wavy hair. Her dark eyes were hard to describe. You know what I mean; they told you Myrtle was well educated and refined, and there was a sophisticated expression in them and yet, at the same time, a lot of tenderness and—only one word for it—goodness. Also they tipped off a sense of humor which five years of tough luck hadn't dented.

Some of the bumps she'd rode over came out a couple of nights later after dinner. It had been her own idea—the idea of having lantern-slides thrown on her unadorned figure. She'd needed an electrician, of

course. She got one and arranged to split her salary with him sixty-five-thirty-five. For three years she head-lined all over the country. Then she received an offer to tour England and the Continent. Her electrician partner didn't want to go. Myrtle hired another boy. But no sooner was she on the steamer than the old electrician took his wife up to the booking-office, told them he had discharged Myrtle, that the act had always belonged to him, and would the office please give him some booking with the new girl he had.

The office looked at the new girl and cut the salary in half. But once the ice had been broken, everybody jumped in, and vaudeville became congested with more or less perfect thirty-sixes who craved to show audiences how beautiful is nature. By the time Myrtle returned from Europe, her type act was a drug on the market.

Which had cut her out of a living. She couldn't sing; her speaking voice didn't carry well enough for stage purposes.

"But what became of all the money you made?" I asked. "You used to salt away a lot every week, as I remember."

"Not so much, Billy," said Myrtle. "I used to send quite a bit home. I bought some bonds, the interest from which is all I've had for a couple of years. What ruined me was oil."

"Oil?"

"Oil stock." Myrtle turned to Freda and smiled. "Why did you want me to bring all my worthless stock down here, Freda?"

"I tell you something, Myrtle," the wife replied. "I want you should show it to Billy. Billy, he's always wanting to buy stock. I like him to see what some real bum stock looks like."

I give Cecil the eye, wondering if he had told Freda about coal-aid, but the usual expression of non-intelligence was spread over his face.

A minute or two later we were looking at some beautiful embossed stock-certificates issued by the Weston Oil Land Company.

"How did you come to buy this junk—and so much of it?" I asked.

"It's a long story, Billy." There was a peculiar tone in Myrtle's voice that made me look at her sharp. Her eyes were burning bright, but the smile on her lips was being pulled a little crooked by the taut nerves just under her velvety skin.

"Men," Freda announced calmly; "men is devils. Billy, you and Cecil go down and poke up Cleopatra. I and Myrtle is going to bed."

When I came up-stairs, Freda was in the dining-room writing a letter which took a lot of thought. But finally she finished it and put it in an envelope.

"Billy," she said, addressing the envelope, "you remember Dodd Antrim?"

SURE I remembered Antrim, but whether he would remember me was something different. Antrim had become pretty close to a millionaire in the past few years, and his old pals in the show business never saw any more of him than his name in the papers as being on the board of directors of this bank or that corporation. I remembered him, though, when he first broke into vaudeville, a big, well-built, handsome kid with a magnetic personality and rich, full voice. He showed class, breeding and education with every turn of his head. It was just these things and the addition of the poise and ease of manner he'd got from his stage experience which started him fast on the road to surplus income-tax declarations when an old friend of his kidded him into selling stocks and bonds.

Dodd's father had been a judge somewhere out West. Before the boy finished acting in college plays, the judge had been stricken with a long, lingering sickness, which proved, among other things, that the judge had lots of friends but no cash. Dodd, looking for a job to make money quick, joined out with a traveling troupe who'd lost their juvenile. Most of his salary went home every week.

When the show disbanded, the leading lady took Dodd and a character comedian and went into vaudeville with a sketch. But as his daddy kept growing weaker and needing more nursing all the time, Dodd found his salary wasn't hardly big enough:

"I remember how he used to borrow the girls' electric irons to press his own clothes and shirts with," I told Freda.

"That's how he met Myrtle," Freda answered, "borrowing her iron. And Myrtle, she got stuck on him."

"All the gals did," I said.

"I never did," Freda stiffly informed me. "He thought acrobats was useless."

"Then what must he have thought of Myrtle?"

"That was the trouble. Myrtle got stuck on him, but he didn't. He liked her, but too much pride, and feeling he was better as a girl who made her living by what God and an electrician put on her, made Dodd only polite to her. Which was enough for Myrtle to worm his troubles out of him.

"One day she sees the expression on his face after he's read a letter from home. Says Myrtle, 'I don't want to inquire into your affairs, Mr. Antrim, but I happen to be pretty well fixed for cash, and if fifty or a hundred or two hundred would do you any good, I'd appreciate your allowing me the pleasure of advancing it.'

"Dodd looks at her a moment. 'I appreciate your kindness, Miss Carter, even though I can't take advantage of it.'

"'Why not?' asks Myrtle.

"'Why—er—I—' There was something in his face Myrtle didn't like.

"'It's clean money,' she said quietly."

Freda paused, pressing down the stamp on the letter.

"Billy, you know men. When Myrtle told Dodd that, why did he get angry?"

"I don't know. Maybe he was ashamed for thinking such a thing."

"Then why didn't he apologize?"

"Apologizing would prove to her he'd got her wrong. Did he take the money?"

"No."

"Then he was ashamed of himself."

"He should still be ashamed, Billy; because, without saying a word to Dodd, Myrtle sent his mother a big money-order, signing his name. And commencing two weeks later, when Antrim's leading lady got peeved at her billing and canceled all her time, putting Dodd out of a job, every week until the old judge died Myrtle sent a money-order."

"Didn't he ever pay her back—after he begun making heavy money?"

"Not even did he write. Not once has Myrtle ever heard from him. Worse than that, Billy, he won't even buy back the stock which Myrtle went broke buying so Dodd would get the commission."

"Stock? What stock?"

"You saw it—that Weston Oil stock."

"You mean—Antrim sold her that?"

Freda nodded.

"Just before she went to Europe, Myrtle played Chicago. In the papers was an ad

of a new oil company. The ad gave the names of the Chicago salesmen. Myrtle saw Dodd's name. She knew his father had just died and Dodd must need money; so she made out a check for all her account was good for. Then she got a broker and told him to buy stock from Dodd, so Dodd would get the commission. Not till she got back from Europe did she find Weston Oil Land is bunk. Last year, when she gets up against it, she had a lawyer write to Antrim asking if the stock is good for anything at all. Myrtle has the answer Dodd wrote the lawyer. In it he says *he never heard of such a company.*"

"Must be some mistake," I say, paralyzed. "Antrim can't be that kind of a crook."

"I tell you something, Billy," Freda said, sealing the envelope. "If I thought money would make you ungrateful and rotten devil like that, I be damned if I don't keep you poor all our life." She handed me the letter. "Put this in the mail-box before we forget it—eh, Billy?"

I TOOK it and started for the R. F. D. box out by the road. Force of habit made me look at the address. It was:

Mr. Dodd Antrim
Vice-President Funding and Operat. Corp.
Broadway, N. Y. C.

"What's the idea?" I gasp.

Freda throws an athletic arm round my neck lovingly.

"I think maybe I don't tell you anything till after Dodd Antrim comes here."

"Antrim—coming here?" I shout.

"Sh," Freda cautions, pointing up-stairs. "Myrtle don't know it."

"Oh, a surprise," I say.

"For both of them. Antrim ain't coming to see Myrtle."

"Then what is he coming for?"

"I tell you, Billy, if I explain now, I spoil a surprise for you, too. You don't care, eh?"

"Not me, old dear," I say. "You ain't never pulled a surprise on me yet that hasn't meant money in the bank."

With that, Freda gives me a rousing kiss and walks out of the room.

Comes Friday, the day before Freda has told me she expected Antrim. Saturday also is the day I'm planning to give my

melancholy coal-aid friend a check for two thousand for some of his choice preferred stock. About ten o'clock Myrtle and Freda climb into the old second-handed Ford to drive into Engletown for some marketing. The week has done Myrtle a world of good; it had taken the strained look from between her eyes, and she had gained a couple of pounds in weight and a quart or two of color. The way she and my babe took to each other had showed me what a regular woman Myrtle was.

"Aren't we going to take Christie with us?" Myrtle asks Freda.

"No. I don't know how long we be gone." Friend wife settles herself behind the wheel and turns toward me. "Billy, I got to trust you to watch Christina. See she don't start climbing up the stairs. Be sure the cellar door is closed. Keep her away from the kitchen stove. She's big enough now to pull things off the table; so don't let her into the pantry where I been baking. Look out she don't get into the ashes in the fireplace, and don't let her play with the bread-knife. If she gets warm, you take off her sweater. She ought to get sleepy about noon; but don't give her nothing to eat till eleven o'clock, anyway, and——"

"And should she drink the coal-oil from any lamp, I'll keep matches away from her," I burst in with, peeved. "You've went out before and found her safe when you returned, ain't you? What are you worrying about?"

Christie has me all wore out about noon when the telephone-bell rings.

"Hello!" I say into the 'phone.

"Hello, you Billy Renton!" comes a hearty voice over the wire. "This is Dodd Antrim."

"How are you, Mr. Antrim," I say, surprised polite.

"Where do you get that 'mister' stuff, old-timer? Listen, Billy; what's the best way for me to drive down to your place to-morrow? How are the roads?"

"What ain't washed out are froze up," I answer. "You better take the train to New Brunswick. I'll meet you there in the Ford. I glued the steering-wheel back on her last week, and the bail-rope I've got holding up her rear end hasn't begun to fray yet."

Antrim laughed.

"Don't mind if I come early, do you?"

Freda's invitation was an answer to prayer. For months I've been searching for an excuse to shake business and get out into the country for a few days. Tell me, Billy; have you got a furnace?"

"We have. Don't worry. Listen; when shall I meet you?"

"I'll catch the nine-o'clock from New York."

"O. K."

"How's the baby, Billy? I'm crazy to see her. So long!"

I hung up and stood thinking, trying to—what they say—reconcile all that Freda had told me about Antrim with the straight-from-the-heart way he'd just talked to me. Especially I couldn't understand a gyp like he must be—taking from women real money for imaginary oil-wells—asking about the baby. He hadn't spoke of her the way most folks do—just to make the daddy feel good and important. He'd meant it, if I knew anything about voices. He was interested in Christie—which I suddenly become, as the unusual silence permeating the house smote suspiciously on my consciousness. Christie was nowhere in my line of hasty vision.

I CALLED. No answer. Madly I dashed into the kitchen. Christie was seated on the floor masticating an unknown substance. As I enter, she chokes down a mouthful. Bounding toward her, I grab something wrapped in tin-foil from her hand. It's the mashed remains of a yeast cake!

"No, no!" I shout, throwing it in the wood-box. "Mustn't eat! It's—it's sour."

"Nice." Christie smiles at me.

"You're wrong, sweetheart," I say, picking her up. "It's sour."

"Nice, daddy," she says.

"Don't contradict your daddy," I say reprovingly, carrying her up-stairs. "It's sour."

Christie's little lip trembles.

"Nice, daddy."

"It is *not* nice. Yeast is sour—*sour!*"

Two large tears roll out of her eyes.

"Nice, daddy."

"All right, dog-gone it," I say, wiping her little fat face and laying her in her crib.

"All right; it's nice."

She looks up at me, sweet and smiling again.

"Sour, daddy."

Then she unclasps one of her hands and shows me the tin-foil off of two other yeast cakes!

"I bet I'll be 'phoning for the doctor before the day is over," I say to myself.

WHEN Freda got home, what with being so busy and talking about other things, somehow or other I didn't get a good chance to tell her about the yeast cakes. I stuck round the house all afternoon waiting for Christie to burst out with something till Freda chased me outside. But putting her to bed that night, I noticed she was a little feverish, and also that there was a couple of ugly little red spots in her cheeks. They didn't seem to annoy Freda, so I didn't say anything.

But I woke up after midnight with an empty, heavy feeling inside me, hearing Christie crying. Freda jumped out of bed and hurried into the babe's room. Likewise I hopped out and fell down-stairs to the telephone. After waiting only about half the night in my bare feet, I got Doc Hanson.

"What's the matter with her?" he asked.

"Her face is covered with spots and she's got a fever and she's crying," I told him.

"I'll look in on her early in the morning." The doc hung up on me.

When I tiptoed into the babe's room, she was sleeping pretty.

"Doc Hanson is coming in the morning," I say.

Freda's eyes clouded.

"I'm sorry, Billy. I don't want doctors telling Christina she is sick and scaring her. I am much better for her as doctors."

"But——"

"I tell you something, Billy." Freda's voice was low and steady and cool. "You go to bed and get over being so frightened. Being scared is contagious, Billy, and me and Christina, we ain't scared none at all now." She gave me a pitying smile and tranquilly closed the door between us.

Waking up out of a cat-nap the next morning, I heard Doc Hanson's voice.

"I'm sorry to have to quarantine you, but I can't take chances on scarlet-fever symptoms."

Freda took it without a word.

"It may be for only a week or ten days," Hanson continued. "I'll notify the authorities. They'll be here to tack up signs in

front of the place sometime before noon. Don't worry." And he went out.

"No, Freda," I holler; "he's wrong! It ain't scarlet fever. It's yeast!"

"Yeast?"

I blurt out the whole story. Freda gives me a look like no human ever received before. Breaking the painful silence comes a little humming song Myrtle is soothing the babe with. Freda's expression suddenly changes entirely.

"What time you say Dodd Antrim will arrive?" she asks.

"It'll be half-past ten before I can get him back from New Brunswick," I say. "Of course, I'll explain to him that Christie hasn't got no more scarlet fever than——"

"Billy," Freda interrupts gently, "when expensive doctors say scarlet fever, who are you and me that we should say yeast?"

"But——"

"The quarantine signs—they'll keep strangers out, and all us in, won't they?"

"Sure, but——"

"I tell you, Billy, I'm glad you 'phone Dr. Hanson. He ain't going to do Christina no harm, and I think he do the rest of us a lot of good." She starts for the door and then turns. "You find coffee on top the stove and ham and eggs in the oven. You toast your own toast."

There was no trouble recognizing Antrim when the big fellow stepped off the train. And because he did nothing but ask questions all the way home, there was no trouble in not mentioning Myrtle, which Freda had warned me against.

Freda was waiting for us at the door.

"Bless your big heart!" Dodd cried, taking both her hands in his. "How do you manage it? You don't look a day older than when we were all trouping together."

Freda blushed.

"I think you trying to get solid with the cook." Then, without any warning at all, she called, "Myrtle!"

But Myrtle had already come down the stairs and was standing on the lowest step.

"You remember Myrtle Carter, don't you, Dodd?" Freda asked calmly.

No answer. From the instant they saw each other, neither Myrtle nor Antrim moved; they stood stock-still, staring at each other. Myrtle was the first to stir.

"Why, of course." There was no more life in her voice than there was color in her cheeks.

"Myrtle Carter!" Dodd mumbled, still staring at her, his heart pumping dark blood into his face.

The tension was broken by Cecil's frantic tones drifting in from the front porch.

"Git out, you dum fool! Turn around and drive on before it's too late!"

I rushed out to see what the trouble was. Stepping out of his flivver, fur collar and everything, was my coal-aid friend.

And at that second, a car with the words: "Health Bureau" painted on it in large type comes to a halt in the road in front of our farm. Two men jump out briskly and commence tacking up signs on our trees.

"Ah, Mr. Renton," McNair lugubriously greets me, "may I have an hour of your valuable time?"

"You may," I say, watching a "Keep Out" sign go on the R. F. D. box. "Pick out any hour you please. There'll be plenty of them for you to choose from during the next week. We're quarantined."

McNair goes white.

"However," I continue blithely, "it's an ill wind that can't blow all the heat out of Cleopatra. So if you'll run your car into the garage, Cecil will help you unload that can of coal-aid I see in the tonneau. You already know where the coal is piled. We're going to have ample time to give your wonderful fluid a thorough demonstration."

BACK in the front room all was silence and emptiness. Up-stairs I heard Myrtle singing quietly to the babe. That was no place for me. A murmur of voices drew me to the kitchen door. On a chair in the corner, smoking one of my pipes, Antrim was earnestly explaining something to Freda, nodding her head and asking short questions while she cooked. Something told me I was unnecessary there.

Trying to remember that I was the host of the party, I wandered out to the garage, feeling confident I could find enough things wrong with the Ford to occupy my mind.

Pretty soon I saw Antrim stroll out of the house and start for the garage. He was frowning—scowling over something unpleasant or puzzling, it seemed to me. I gave myself one guess what it was—I and Freda tricking him up against a dirty piece of business he, no doubt, figured had been buried years ago. I was all set to give him an evasive answer to anything he'd

say and then change the subject. So you can imagine what a twister his first remark handed me.

"What sort of a looking fellow is McNair?"

"Do you know him?" I asked quick.

"No."

"I'll introduce you," I said. "He's down in the cellar with Cecil."

"Guess again, Billy," Antrim smiled. "Listen."

Coming closer to us rapidly, I heard Cecil's voice spilling rude remarks.

"Believe it's nothing but a skin game; by gracious, I do!"

"You wrong me," McNair protested funereally. "I was merely—" He saw Antrim standing beside me and stopped.

"He merely refuses to spray coal-aid on the coal," Cecil violently volunteered.

"There are reasons, Mr. Renton," McNair uneasily said, "why I cannot at this moment demonstrate the wonderful properties of coal-aid. I——"

"Coal-aid—that's the stuff you claim will reduce coal consumption. Let me see some of it," said Antrim.

"Excuse me; but I cannot permit any one——"

"Where is the stuff?" Antrim asked Cecil.

"In the cellar," pipes my loyal peasantry, leading the way.

Out of the tail of my eye I saw McNair lagging behind, looking speculatively toward the road.

"You know what they do to guys who break quarantine, don't you?" I murmur.

Sad-eyed Sam cusses beautiful, but follows us into the cellar. Antrim takes a cup of coal-aid, smells it, discovers he doesn't like the taste of it and, pouring the stuff inside the furnace, he watches the sparks and flames for a moment or two. Then he grunted:

"I thought so. Same stuff."

"Same as what?" I ask.

"How much has he got to you for, Billy?" Dodd inquires.

"Not a nickel. My check for two thousand is still with me." McNair turns a delicate green. "Listen, Dodd; ain't the stuff any good. Don't it save coal?"

"Sure it does, Billy. We investigated it some time ago. It saves coal, but *it simply ruins the furnace*. And *quickly*, too.

"That's why he daren't use it to-day after

he found we were all to be held here in quarantine for a week or more. He was afraid of ruining your furnace before he could get away with your money."

"A crook!" I yell, making a determined and virtuous leap at him.

"No!" shouts McNair.

"Haven't I seen you before somewhere?" Antrim asks unfeelingly.

"No!" says McNair. "Listen, Mr. Renton; I can explain——"

"Billy!" It's Freda, at the head of the steps. "You and Dodd better get clean. I have lunch in ten minutes."

WE CAME up then, and Cecil and McNair went outside.

When I came into the dining-room a few minutes later, I heard Antrim at the 'phone say: "You'll come to the Rentons' right away? Thank you." As he hung up, Freda entered with a platter of country sausage and buckwheat cakes cooked as no other wife in the world can cook them.

"We sit down," Freda announced. "Myrtle, she'll be here in a few minutes. Christina is almost asleep."

While I'm serving, we hear Cecil's voice outside.

"Serves you right, you ornery cuss! I hope we stay quarantined all winter."

Myrtle tiptoes hurriedly into the room.

"Who," she whispers excited; "who is that man out there with Cecil? What is he doing here?"

"Do you know him?" Dodd asks, with quick interest.

Myrtle gives him the answer full in the face.

"He's the man through whom you sold me that worthless oil stock."

Dodd's jaw tightens.

"I have never sold worthless stock in my life," he whips out. "You are mistaken."

"There is no mistake about the value of Weston Oil Land Company's——"

"What?" Dodd interrupts. "What's that name?"

"Weston Oil Land Company."

"*Weston!*" Dodd's face screws up into a baffled frown. "My company was Western Oil Lands, Consolidated."

There's a dead silence, during which we all absorb that statement. Gradually the light breaks plenteously. It's the same old trick. When Myrtle had instructed Mc-

Nair to buy Western Oil Lands from Antrim, and had told him the amount she was going to pay for it, McNair had succumbed to temptation. He brought her stock labeled "Weston Oil Land," hoping to fool Myrtle, unfamiliar as she was with stocks and bunco games. And Myrtle had taken the queer stuff without dreaming it wasn't the stock Dodd was selling.

"Listen," I say finally; "somebody should 'phone for the police."

"I did, a little while ago," Dodd answers. Then he turns to Myrtle. "Why did you never reply to any of the advertisements I ran in *Variety*, asking you to get into communication with me?"

"Ads?" Myrtle asks. "When?"

"All through the fall, winter and spring after I left vaudeville."

"I never saw one of them. That was the season I was in Europe."

"You see, Dodd?" Freda eases in gently. "All this time you think Myrtle is angry at you because she never reply or answer your ads. And you, Myrtle"—she faces the originator of poses plastic—"you think Dodd, when he gets money, forgets all about you. Dodd, show Myrtle what you been carrying for six years."

"Now, Freda"—Dodd flushes up embarrassed—"I only told you about——"

"Who arranged this house-party?" asks Freda severely. "Show Myrtle that deposit-slip."

From his pocketbook Dodd took a slip of paper. It showed where every penny she had sent his mother had been deposited to Myrtle's credit in the First National Bank.

"It has laid there drawing interest for over five years," Dodd said.

"Interest, but no attention," I crack, striving to brighten the sordid atmosphere in which the sausage and cakes were cooling.

A motor-horn sounded out in the road.

"Hey, Renton!" somebody called. I look. It's Deputy Sheriff Bill Hoag and Constable Crilly.

"Disregard them signs," I shout. "The crisis is over. Come in and get him."

Hoag takes one look at McNair. Then he fishes a circular out of his pocket and studies it importantly.

"Ah!" Hoag exhales freely. "Ladies and gentlemen, permit me to introduce Mr. August Weiss, alias Gloomy Gus, alias Weston, alias Stannard—who sold thirty

thousand dollars' worth of Stannard Oil stock in Pennsylvania before entering this friendly state. Gloomy, bid the ladies and gents good-by. You won't see them again for about thirty years."

Out goes McNair, and he deposits himself on the rear seat of Hoag's flivver.

AS FAR as I was concerned, the rest of the day was a total loss. Between Freda, busy with the babe, Cecil with Cleo, and Dodd and Myrtle talking their heads off to each other in the front room, there was nothing left for me to do but go out and pick on the Ford, ruminating meanwhile that when it came to choosing sterling investment securities, my wife's husband was one hundred per cent. boob.

Late that afternoon, after it had been dark for quite a while, Freda came into the garage. With her was Christie, her fat little cheeks apple-red from a short walk round the farm in the cold air.

"Billy, you better get ready for dinner. And mix up some cocktails from that sympathetic gin you make."

"What are we celebrating?" I ask.

"Nothing—yet. But I want to make everybody feel so good that they do and say things we can celebrate later. Dodd, he just ask me would we object if he came down next Saturday and spend over Sunday."

"He works fast," I say. "How did you get him down here?"

"I tell you, Billy." Freda wraps me confidentially in her firm acrobatic embrace. "It was Gloomy Gus. Don't be mad, Billy; but I made him tell me all about coal-aid before I sent him down-stairs to you that first day. He said coal-aid was recommended by big men like Dodd Antrim and so forth. So I write to Dodd and ask is he lying. Also, I tell him McNair will be here Saturday, and if he would like to spend the week-end here with home cooking, we like to see him."

"Wasn't you taking an awful chance—with Myrtle here?"

"I tell you something. It's about time Myrtle was getting married. I know she never marry anybody but Antrim—if he can explain things good. If he can't, I know she will say t'hell with him and forget him. So I give them both a chance."

"Which is more than you give me," I say, remembering how she'd coal-aided me

into showing myself up to her again as a simp. I feel so rotten about failing again I can't help saying,

"For a husband, old girl, you've got nothing to be proud of, have you?"

Freda looks at me, hurt; a little tear shows in her blue eyes.

"Billy"—she hugs me—"you *mustn't* feel like that. I—I wouldn't wish you to be any different from just what you are. Why, Billy," she goes on, her voice husky and sort of straining, "you and me, we are so happy together because we are only just what we are. If you and me was what we each think we would *like* to be, maybe we wouldn't get along with each other so comfortable and nice."

That was a new thought—but cheerful, and worth remembering.

"Besides, Billy, you made money out of McNair, anyway. There was several big rewards offered for his arrest."

"Antrim'll get them," I say. "He 'phoned for Hoag."

"I told him to," Freda smiles placidly. "And because I don't need no rewards, I give it all to—" She breaks off short. "*Christina!*"

I whirl around. The babe has both hands up to her elbows in my can of lubricating grease. As we look, she raises a fistful of it to her mouth.

"No!" I spring and catch her hand just in time. "No. That's sour."

Christina smiles.

"Nice, daddy."

"All right," I say, wiping her hands; "call it anything you like. But I wish you'd lose the habit you're acquiring from your mother of doing things first and talking about 'em afterward. It ain't sociable. It's—it's——"

"Nice and sour, daddy?" asks the babe, pointing to the grease-can.

"Sweetheart," I say, picking her up in my arms and starting toward the house and the beautiful meal I know Freda has cooked, "there is a pickle has been famous for years, which some day you'll get sick on. Part of the name is a word you haven't learned yet. But sometimes I philosophize that life, especially married life, and particularly married-to-Freda life, is best described by the name of that pickle."

"Sour, daddy?"

"Sweet and sour," I say.



Everybody's Chimney Corner

*Where Reader, Author and Editor
Gather to Talk Things Over*

MEMBERS of the Chimney Corner circle frequently bring up the question of modern manners, and the implication always is that good manners are extinct.

One relates an incident of going to see a city official on an important matter and having the official rudely walk out on him before he could say what he wanted to. Another tells of the irreverence of youth for old age; another of the brutality of people toward one another in public conveyances; another tells of hearing a youngster, in beginning an after-dinner address before a very dignified body of older men—artists and scientists—say, "Speaking of art and science, I know a man who can spit over a barn," and so forth. Another writes that the younger authors are behaving scandalously in the matter of strong words and strong deeds.

DESPITE the fact that a minister has called me a fool, also an ass, and that a man, apparently cultured and well read, ended a specific criticism of EVERYBODY'S with the words: "The magazine is certainly rotten enough without that," I refuse to believe that good manners are extinct.

That manners are changing there is no doubt, but as to their changing for the worse, there is considerable doubt. There is always opposition to anything new. Some folks still proclaim that kerosene makes the best light. Maybe, in manners as in other things, it is merely a question of getting used to the new. Some do and some don't. There are several forms of accusing a person of an untruth, and several forms of getting rid of an undesirable. For example.

No. 1: Are you quite sure, sir, that you are correct in your statement? My information, if you will pardon me, sir, is—well, I should say just the opposite.

No. 2: You're a liar!

No. 1: Really, this is very embarrassing, my dear sir, but I have something quite important to do. It is most unfortunate that I am engaged at present,

but won't you please excuse me, sir, and by all means call later.

No. 2: Oh, go to hell!

WHICH of these forms is to be preferred? Certainly the No. 2 forms in each case are brief and to the point; they breathe action—and "action!" "action!" seems to be the key-word of the age. Also, they have another virtue—they invite action.

We dare say that the reader who was so precipitately deserted by the city official spoke to him in the language of a bygone age. Perhaps if he had barked crisply, "Here, you blankety blank grafter, cough up!" it would not have been the official who took to flight. Our friend who speaks of brutality in public conveyances should not forget, in connection therewith, the possible after-effects of the recent greatest example of mass-brutality in the history of the world. And as to youth's lack of reverence for old age, has not our friend heard of the prodigious contempt with which old age looks upon youth? This is an age of an I for an I.

THE critic of the youthful speaker should know that after-dinner speaking is as dead as free silver. Since 1919 it has been impossible for any one legally to prepare properly either to make an after-dinner speech or to listen to one.

We are assured that it was due to an oversight that after-dinner speaking was not included among the prohibitive clauses of the Volstead Act. And as to the behavior of our young authors, or, rather, the scandalous behavior of those whom they place on the printed page, what can a poor author do but mirror the life of his time? If this is an age of four "f's"—frankness, flippancy, flasks and flappers—who made it so?

"Speaking of manners," says a friend of ours, "I know a fellow who can spit over the Woolworth Building."

TO THE few who still want EVERYBODY'S to publish articles, we refer this single sentence from a Kentucky reader: "I take daily papers for news and I take EVERYBODY'S for fiction, and I get it, too."

This sentence contains the only argument we can use to persuade any one to buy EVERYBODY'S. We might insert the word "good" before fiction, but we will let our readers do that in the following comments:

SOUTH DAKOTA: Your fiction is good. **FLORIDA:** Read "Godless Valley" and enjoyed it. **NEW JERSEY:** "Phantom Auto" interesting. "Breaking the Blue Roan" emblematic of good, clean fiction, full of snap and color. **ILLINOIS:** Mrs. Willsie's new novel is good. She sees human things as humans should. **NEW YORK:** "Mountain Farmers" is a rare story. The author's sense of beauty is true. I know from much magazine-reading that "Mountain Farmers" must have had a hard time finding a godfather. **CALIFORNIA:** Stoddard Goodhue is altogether different, and intensely interesting in his scientific solutions. **PENNSYLVANIA:** You're making good on that first line on EVERYBODY'S cover page: "First in Fiction." **CALIFORNIA:** You're on the right course. Have cut out all magazines which sandwich in ads and publish wishy-washy tales.

SEVERAL readers have summed up so much more clearly what EVERYBODY'S is trying to do in its fiction than the editor has ever been able to do that we are going to give space to two of them:

NEW YORK: I think EVERYBODY'S is steadily achieving distinction. Quite frankly, I don't mean distinction in the sheer artistic sense. But I do mean that it reflects the finer, the more robust, the more sincere in what the every-day American likes. He likes to kid himself, of course, and EVERYBODY'S helps him, with good taste, with skill and without staleness. He likes to adventure, and you travel with him easily, with gaiety and with a sturdy touch of grimness. He likes the ladies, and you give them to him, more alive than most fiction ladies, less squeamish than those in our "reticent" magazines, and not dirty, as those in our "realistic" magazines.

PENNSYLVANIA: You bathe and rinse off the slime of the eternal triangle, eternally crooked-sided, as Auntie McGuire says, with innocent soft-soap now and then; you give us some mush and delicious candy-sweets, but before we get off our feed on too much dessert, you drive it down our throats with something that makes us think we are sword-swallowers—"Foraker's Folly," for instance. How clear Titus sees when he looks at his ideal! I am not at all sure but that you have an ideal in EVERYBODY'S as clear as he has in pine.

AND now, speaking of manners once more, here are two widely contrasting forms of saying the same thing:

FROM A GENTLEMAN WITH A SLEDGE-HAMMER: To print the kind of magazine that EVERYBODY'S is now getting out is a criminal waste of print-paper; to read it a simple waste of time. How a magazine could descend to such piffle, which is not even good fiction, as it now is publishing is beyond my comprehension.

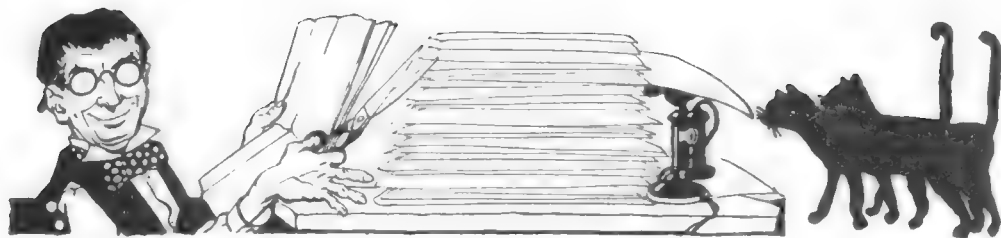
FROM A GENTLEMAN WITH A FEATHER DUSTER: December marked a crisis. I said, "That is the rottenest thing EVERYBODY'S has ever done." January even worse. Some way, I believe in you. I hope for you. You have been too fine and clean to let one or two or a dozen pitiful troubles make me lose faith in you. You must feel your way, but I believe you will be finer and better than ever when you find it. Inclosed find evidence of the sincerity of my friendship—for twenty years one of your friends.

EVERYBODY'S editor has often heard it said that if a short-story classic of a past age were sent in manuscript-form to a magazine of to-day, its worth would not be recognized, that it would be rejected. I do not know how often the trick has been tried on me with success, but recently we have had an experience which leads us to believe that we are likely to recognize a good story, old or young.

Some months ago we read a story in manuscript with such breathless interest that we rushed it into the first open issue and characterized it as "a refreshingly original piece of work." When the magazine containing it appeared, our judgment was confirmed, but in a way distressingly awkward to us. Though not in the same language, it contained the same incidents, the same plot as a story by Robert Louis Stevenson called "The Beach of Falesá." The EVERYBODY'S story was called "The Lotus Bride," and bore the name "Hrolf Wisby." The name was unknown to us, and we asked the literary agency through whom the manuscript came about him. They said he was a Scandinavian writer who came well recommended. No one in this office found reason to suspect the story, and, after our conversation with the literary agency, whose standing is unquestioned, we saw no reason to suspect "Mr. Wisby."

When Mr. Wisby was called upon for an explanation, he declared—and his manners would have been a joy to our critics of modern manners—that it was simply a remarkable coincidence, that he was not guilty of conscious plagiarism. Coincidence or not, we feel that we have imposed upon our readers, and that we have done violence to a revered author who is not here to defend himself. We apologize. Also, we condemn "Mr. Wisby's" coincidence habit as being dangerous, though we do commend his manners.

SEWELL HAGGARD.



Prose and Worse, by Gridley Adams

DO YOU BELIEVE IN SIGNS?

In Hartford, Conn.: "Italian Dinning Room" (Crash! There goes another lotta dishes.)

In Green River, Wyo.: "Hotel Tomahawk." (Would you take a chance?)

In Wausau, Wis.: "American Print Shop. Chas. Spychalla." (D. A. C.)

In Hartford Times: "A Story That Will Stir! 'The Path of the Hurricane.'" (I'll say it should.)

On Springdale Ave., East Orange: "L. Garb, Tailor." (V. H. S.)

In Hartford Courant: "Thomas J. Lawless, Justice of the Peace, Dies in Windsor." (There just hain't nothing in names.)

Movie sign: "Agnes Ayres in 'The Shriek.'" (That silent drama.)

In Martinsville, Ind.: "Cure and Son, Undertakers." (And the sign on the door-mat says "Welcome.") (G. W. M.)

In Hartford, Conn.: "Salad's Restaurant."

Opposite Washington Ave., New Orleans, cemetery entrance: "Stop your Auto Troubles Here." (D. V.)

(Warrensburg, N. Y., News)

STRAY STOCK—Strayed into my possession, one black heifer with a little white mostly white, with a few red spots; and one red heifer with a little white.

(H. F. B.)

Boy, bring me those color-charts; hurry!

(Rochester, Minn., Post)

Mr. Hissinger broke his right arm above the elbow. He was also bruised severely about the city.

That was tough.

(Lyceum Magazine)

Lecturer-Entertainer Francis J. Gable got hard hit with erysipelas right in the midst of his season. And the plucky poet kept on traveling.

Well, that's tougher yet.

(Letter received by a county school superintendent)

In regard to Elliot missing So Much school the first month he was ill & the Dr. told me not to send him till he got stronger & his Eyes did not Hurt him so Much then he was trapping & going to School & the Teacher Sent him Home because he She said Smell of Skunk She said he would Have to quit School or quit Trapping.

Teacher, please may I change my seat?

Everybody's Magazine, June, 1922

(Utica Daily Press)

An experienced woman wants position as housekeeper in family of two at once. Address A. J., care Press office.

(H. A. B.)

Mother of twins herself?

(Los Angeles Times)

God made California different from every other land on earth.

He sure did; but some of t e fleas got away.

(Omaha Bee)

BOY SHOT IN WATERMELON PATCH MAY NOW RECOVER.

(G. E. F.)

Oh, well, that's not such a fatal spot.

(Nelson. B. C., News)

IMMORALITY certain. Swedenborg's great work on heaven and hell, the life after death and a real world beyond. Over 400 pages. Only 25c.

(C. D.)

(Cumberland, Md., Evening Times)

Ambrosia, in Greek mythology, was the food of the gods which preserved their immortality.

(G. G. T.)

Boy, get me five cents' worth of ambrosia, 'cause I can't wait to read 400 pages.

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(Middletown, Conn., Press)

The crew of the steamer *Hartford*, on arriving at New York Saturday morning, were informed that they made the last trip of the season and would be placed in dry dock in Hoboken. (P. D.)

Dry dock is bad enough, but—Hoboken!

(New York Times)

While hundreds of Chicago society people sat hushed in the Fourth Presbyterian Church this afternoon waiting for the peals of the wedding-march, the wedding was suddenly called off. Miss Baker failed to appear.

At last—a wedding that “went off without a hitch.”

(Fort Atkinson, Wis., paper)

The pupils of Miss Alice Felbel will give a recital at the M. E. Church, Friday night at 8 o'clock. No admission. (E. W. S.)

Even the pupils couldn't get in.

(Liberal, Mo., News)

TO THE LATE MR. S. W. COOPER'S FRIENDS:

Several who have been interested enough to ask me if the banjo was returned that the man borrowed from Mr. Cooper before his death. I wish to say no; he is not man enough to return it without I go to law. So now if you are entertained in some places of business you will know it is by a dead man's banjo (who cannot speak for himself), and was kept by some one who has no principle or honesty. Don't think I expect him to bring it back on account of this, but I want the honest citizens of Liberal to know him. MRS. GEO. STONE. (E. C. G.)

If music be the feud of love, let's have one more dance.

(Delecan, Ill., Times)

A trapper at Washburn has trapped a blue skunk, the first one ever seen or heard of.

Oh, you're wrong, 'cause I had wind of one of them things once.

(Chicago Tribune)

WOMEN!

To be or not to BE? That is the question. Whether you will go on living without the necessities of life or will you have the luxuries that you dream about $\frac{3}{8}$. (M. S. C.)

Give me about ten minutes more sleep, then I'll tell you.

(Galva, Ill., Item)

CLUB MEMBERS AND FAMILIES TO MEET.

Daughter, this is father.

(Sign in Hartford, Conn.)

HALF-SOLES SEWED ON \$1.00.

That's the ticket—I'm for anything that'll make the “dollar” wear longer.

(York, Pa., Dispatch)

LOST—Young tiger-kitten, Friday octagon shape, Swiss movement, on George or Market Streets. Reward if returned to 215 N. George St., third floor. (D. R. P.)

Come, ticky, ticky, ticky, ticky!

(Arizona Republican)

Bright colored girl for window-demonstration work.

One with afterglow preferred.

(In Harding's very own Marion Star)

Dainty Swiss Kerchiefs are but 10c. For women with embroidered corners.

(C. L. M'G.)

Oh, the cutey cuties!

(Hartford Times)

Dr. Elizabeth Thelberg, of Vassar, says: “I know of nothing prettier than the calf of a young woman.”

**Backward, turn backward, O Time in your flight;
Make all the old ones young just for the sight.**

(Boston paper)

POLICE THINK THAT MISS DAVIS WAS ILL

Miss Harriet M. Davis, aged 50, single, of 23 St. Botolph St., was found lying unconscious in the alleyway at the rear of 23 St. Botolph St., Back Bay, at 3:45 this morning. Except for her hat and coat, which hung in a closet, Miss Davis was dressed as she would be before retiring. (M. L. B.)

Goloshes, 'neverthing?

(Everybody's for February. Uh, huh!)

He comes to her without stretched arms and catches her to him. She quivers in repulsion at his touch. (L. R.)

Ugh!

NOTE

Will “Everybody's Sweetheart,” writing from Delavan, Wis., kindly send her name and address, that the original clipping may be sent to her?

GRD.



Everybody's Chestnut Tree

EDITOR'S NOTE: Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped addressed envelope.

A WOMAN went into a cigar store to buy some cigars for her husband, who was laid up.

"Do you want them mild or strong, madam?" the clerk asked.

"Give me the strongest you have," she said. "The last ones he had broke in his pocket."

AN ENGLISHMAN, newly arrived in this country, was taken home to dinner one night by a friend. There was corn on the table, and the host, knowing that most Englishmen are not very familiar with this vegetable, asked if he liked it.

"Oh, yes," replied the visitor, apparently not wishing to appear discourteous; "I like it."

But when the platter of Golden Bantam was passed, he did not take any.

"Why," said the host, "I thought you said you liked corn."

"I do like it," explained the Englishman; "but I don't like it well enough to eat it."

THE discordant music rendered by the so-called orchestra had so upset one of the diners that he called the restaurant manager and remarked:

"I note the paragraph on your menu wherein you state that the orchestra will play anything on request. Can you prove the assertion?"

"Yes," replied the manager. "Their repertoire is very extensive. What do you wish them to play?"

"Tell 'em to play pinocle until I have finished my meal, and I will be very grateful."

A DEAF-MUTE, raised in the city, went to the country for a few days. He saw a farmer's wife feeding the chickens. A rooster straightened up suddenly and crowed. The man got out his pencil and pad and wrote,

"Was he badly choked?"

AN AUTO dashed along a Texas country road and, rounding a curve, came suddenly upon a man with a gun on his shoulder and a weak, sick-looking dog beside him. The dog was directly in the path of the machine. The chauffeur sounded his horn, but the dog did not move until he was struck. After that, he didn't move, either.

The car stopped, and one of the occupants got out and went back. He had once paid a farmer ten dollars for killing a calf that belonged to another farmer, and this time he was wary.

"Was that your dog?" he inquired.

"Yes."

"Looks as if we had killed him."

"Certainly looks so."

"Very valuable dog?"

"Well, not so very."

"Will five dollars satisfy you?"

"Yes."

"Well then, here you are." He handed the man a five-dollar bill, and added, "I'm sorry to have broken up your hunt."

"I wasn't goin' hunting," replied the owner of the dog.

"Not going hunting? Then, what were you doing with the dog and the gun?"

"Goin' down to the woods yonder to shoot the dog."

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW was recently lecturing in Dublin, and, as is his practise, he began with the most uncomplimentary thing he could think of. This time it was a bitter tirade on the state of the children's teeth, which he had noticed while walking through the poorer quarters of the city.

"If you would devote the money to dentistry which you waste on reviving Irish, a dead language, it would do you more credit."

At this the audience began to hiss and boo most vigorously. Shaw waited for a momentary lull in the storm and then went on,

"If you don't keep quiet, I'll continue this lecture in Irish, and then not one of you will understand a word of it."

There was attentive silence from that moment.

A NOVICE was braving the Dartmouth ski-jump. He shot down the incline, lurched weakly at the take-off, landed face downward below, and finished the slide, nose first, plowing into the snow smother.

"You jumped too late, Joe!" yelled an enthusiast.

"Naw"—from the smother below—"I jumped too soon. Should have learned more about the game first."

A YOUNG woman in a small Southern city recently inherited from her aunt a piece of property which brought her an income of one hundred dollars a month.

She decided to start a bank-account, and, acting upon the advice of her father, opened it in the First National, although her own preference was for the Commonwealth. Shortly after, she went to her father in high indignation.

"Look at this," she said, presenting him one of her checks. "I told you that old First National was no good. The idea of a bank not having fifty dollars on hand!"

Her father gravely inspected the check. It was marked, "Insufficient Funds."

THE hotel manager jumped on a bell-boy for whistling in the lobby.

"Don't you know that it is against the rules for an employee to whistle while on duty?" he demanded sternly.

"Ain't whistling, sir," protested the boy. "I'm paging Mrs. Rich's dog."

AT A church dedication the preacher in charge of the finances was calling for contributions, and for a time they came in freely. At last there was a halt, and the desired goal had not been reached. After a somewhat embarrassing wait, a well-dressed, pleasant-looking gentleman, who already had given freely, rose and stated that he and his family would be good for a certain sum if the entire amount of the debt were raised. This proposition took, and the subscriptions came in rapidly until the peak was passed. The managing preacher was delighted and thus expressed himself:

"We greatly appreciate the generous help of this gentleman, and I am sure that God will bless him. And I wish and predict for him a great increase in his business."

The speaker noticed that everybody smiled broadly, and he could not understand why. Turning to the pastor, he whispered,

"What are they smiling at?"

The pastor replied,

"That gentleman who was so generous is the undertaker."

LITTLE ETHEL was an only child, and one day, when the minister called, she was told to entertain him in the parlor until her mother could see him.

A few minutes later the mother, on her way down-stairs, heard the visitor ask Ethel how many brothers and sisters she had, and, to her surprise and consternation, the little miss answered, "Seven."

Although somewhat perturbed, the mother made no comment upon the remark of her little daughter, but sent her out to play.

After the minister had left, the child was taken to task and asked why she had said there were seven children. Ethel replied,

"Because I didn't want that strange gentleman to know that you were so poor that you didn't have but one child."

AN IRISHMAN picked up a squirrel the hunter had shot from the top limb of a tree. Looking at it sadly, he asked:

"Why did ye waste the shot? Sure he'd 'ave died of the fall."

"**WHY** did your husband lick the editor of the Squashville *Item*?"

"Because he had it in his old paper that I gave a punk tea."



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I had never earned more than \$50 a month. Last week I cleared \$200 and this week \$218. You have done wonders for me.—Geo. W. Kearns, 107 W. Park Place, Oklahoma City, Okla.

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I took your course two years ago. Was earning \$15 a week cleaning. Am now selling many of the largest firms in the U. S. I have earned more than \$100 in a day. You secured me my position. Our Sales Manager is a graduate of yours.—J. L. De Boinis, 4615 Warwick Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

Earned \$1,562 in Thirty Days
My earnings for the past thirty days are \$1,562.00, and I won Second Prize in March, although I only worked two weeks during that month.—C. W. Campbell, Greensburg, Pa.

Earned \$1,500 in Six Weeks
My earnings for March were over \$1,000 and over \$1,500 for the last six weeks, while last week my earnings were \$356.00. I travel eleven months out of the year, working 5 days each week. The N. S. T. A. dug me out of a rut where I was earning less than \$1,000 a year and showed me how to make a success.—J. P. Overstreet, Dallas, Texas.



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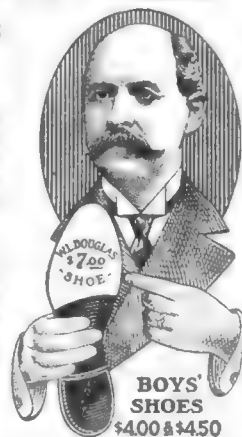
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To do this, just apply a little Liquid Arvon at night before retiring; use enough to moisten the scalp and rub it in gently with the finger tips. By morning, most, if not all, of your dandruff will be gone, and three or four more applications should completely remove every sign and trace of it.

You will find, too, that all itching of the scalp will stop, and your hair will look and feel a hundred times better. You can get Liquid Arvon at any drug store. A four-ounce bottle is usually that is needed.

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Bernarr Macfadden. Note his thick, luxuriant healthy hair.

I even tried a hair tonic, but soon threw it out of the window.

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Here I am, thirty years later, with a head of hair as shown in the accompanying picture.

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Falling Hair
Baldness
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Superfluous Hair
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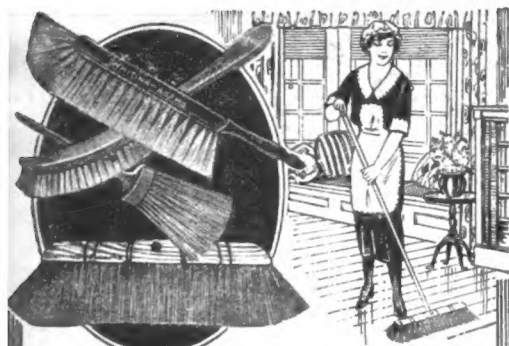
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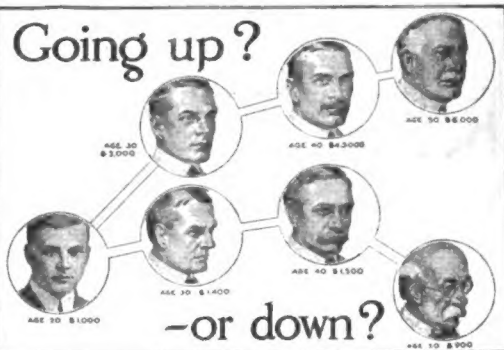
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